MOSES BROWN CAPTAIN U.S.N.

EDGAR STANTON MACLAY

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MOSES BROWN, CAPTAIN U. S. N.
Sketched from an old portrait.

MOSES BROWN
CAPTAIN U.S.N.

By

EDGAR STANTON MACLAY, A. M.

Author of A History of the United States Navy, A History of American Privateers, Reminiscences of the Old Navy, Life and Adventures of Admiral Philip; Editor of the Journal of William Maclay (U. S. Senator from Pennsylvania, 1789-1791), Editor of the Diary of Samuel Maclay (U. S. Senator from Pennsylvania, 1802-1809)

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To the Memory of

EMILY ADAMS GETCHELL

February 7, 1850—July 2, 1901

One of those Noblewomen of America to whose Patriotism
We are Indebted for the Preservation and Commemoration of many Heroic Episodes
in Our Country's History

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

212230

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EXPLANATORY

That two important battles, fought on the high seas in our struggle for independence by a regularly commissioned American war-ship, should have escaped official record or historical note during the last one hundred years is, indeed, a remarkable fact. The ship was the *General Arnold*, of twenty guns and one hundred and twenty men, commanded by Moses Brown, who afterward became a captain in the navy; some of the officers serving under him also entering the navy, notably Patrick Fletcher, who, when commanding the 40-gun frigate *Insurgent*, was lost with his ship, in the great equinoctial gale of September, 1800.

The only official mention we have of the *General Arnold* is an entry in Lieutenant George F. Emmons' admirable "Statistical History of the United States Navy," published "under the

authority of the Navy Department" in 1850. This entry reads as follows: "*General Arnold,* brig, twenty guns, one hundred and twenty men, commanded by J. Magee, [the ship] from Massachusetts, built in 1778. [On] January 7, 1779, drove ashore at Plymouth, and was lost with seventy-five men." That this entry is erroneous will be seen by the fact, now clearly established, that the *General Arnold,* so far from having been wrecked January, 1779, in March and May of that year fought two battles with British armed ships.[1]

Both actions took place within a short sail of the coast of Portugal, near where the 44-gun frigate *Constitution,* in 1815, achieved her greatest triumph and performed her most bril-

[1]It is far from the writer's purpose, in citing this error, to cast any disparagement on Lieutenant Emmons' history. That the error exists is not that officer's fault, but that of the then-established records, which failed to note the *General Arnold's* splendid services. Lieutenant Emmons' work is monumental, and will stand for years as a model of conscientious, painstaking labor—down to the minutest detail.

liant service. The first English vessel was the heavily armed privateer *Gregson* of Liverpool, carrying twenty guns (of heavier caliber than the American ship) and one hundred and eighty men; of whom eighteen were killed and a proportionate number were wounded. The *Gregson* was taken only after a desperate action of "two hours and fifteen minutes."

The second action, also, was with a heavily armed English privateer, the *Nanny*, of sixteen guns. Though of inferior force, the *Nanny* made a magnificent fight—actually sinking alongside the *General Arnold*, her men scarcely having time to man the boats.

Although the *General Arnold* was a cruiser armed and sent out at private expense, she can properly be accounted a part of the regular navy of the Revolution. At that time, 1779, the Continental navy had been reduced to six vessels: one of eighteen, one of twenty, one of twenty-eight and three of thirty-two guns.

From this time on, to the close of the Revolution, Congress depended almost entirely on our

privateers to maintain the flag on the high seas, the Government frequently calling on them for special missions of national importance; Captain Brown himself three years later—having Henry Lunt, who had served under John Paul Jones in the famous *Bonhomme Richard-Serapis* fight, as his first lieutenant—successfully performing a voyage to l'Orient and back to Baltimore on an errand of interest to the entire country.

That such services as the *General Arnold* performed have escaped official record and formal notice upward of one hundred years, is only another evidence of the general neglect with which our maritime interests have been treated by the people. There is not a land battle—not even the veriest skirmish—which occurred in the Revolution that has not been exploited in page after page of official and popular literature, while counties, cities and other geographical points innumerable have been named in their honor.

The so-called "battle" of Lexington, in

which a few brave farmers, armed mostly with shotguns and pitchforks—having no military formation or pretension whatever—were defeated by a detachment of British regulars, with a loss of seven killed and nine wounded, and no injury to the enemy, is familiar to every school child in the United States. Yet, here we have two "real live" sea battles—between regularly armed and commissioned cruisers, in one of which eighteen men were killed, with a proportionate number wounded—which for over a hundred years have had not even official record! Is it possible that the general opprobrium of the name Benedict Arnold—after whom this gallant ship was named—had anything to do with this erasure of all mention of her distinguished services from official records? General Arnold made his treasonable overtures to the British a few months after Brown's return to Newburyport.

Shortly after her second victory, the *General Arnold* herself was captured by the English 50-gun ship *Experiment*, Captain Sir James

Wallace, so it is probable that all her papers, records, logs etc., were lost. The *Experiment* sailed for Charleston, S. C., where Captain Brown was placed in a prison ship. As illustrating the vicissitudes of war, it is interesting to note that Sir James himself, soon afterward, was captured by Count d'Estaing's fleet.

Captain Brown did not reach his home until seven months after his capture by the *Experiment*, so that it is more than likely that his official report of these actions to the owner of the *General Arnold*, Nathaniel Tracy, was made verbally, and no record of it is likely to be in existence.

We have, however, four authentic narratives of these actions which establish, beyond question, their claim to a place in the pages of history. The first is the private diary of Captain Brown himself, in his own handwriting, which was discovered at a distant point in Maine many years after his death. The original diary is now in the hands of the Maine Historical Society.

Next, we have the journal of Thomas Greele

(who was sailing-master in the *General Arnold*) and the "Narrative of Ignatius Webber," who was a prize-master in the same ship. It was only at a comparatively recent date that these valuable records were brought to light, and the writer frankly acknowledges that he is greatly indebted to the late Emily Adams Getchell—to whom this work is dedicated—for their unearthing.

Fourthly, we have the official report of the British commander of the second English privateer—giving entirely corroborative statements of the action—a copy of which, fortunately, has been preserved, so that, taken altogether, we have one of the completest and most satisfactory accounts of any sea battle fought in the Revolution.

Another feature of consideration in this work is the account given of the United States sloop-of-war *Merrimac's* valuable services in the war against France, 1798-1801. The river Merrimac is famous in American history, there having been in all three ships in our navy bearing

that name. The reading public is familiar with the second and third *Merrimacs:* the iron-mailed monster that caused such fearful havoc among the National wooden warships in Hampton Roads, March 8, 1862, and the clumsy collier which Hobson so gallantly carried into Santiago's harbor, June 3, 1898. It is an interesting fact that both these *Merrimacs* (one against the North and the other for it) were commanded by sons of the South. The late Emily Adams Getchell published a poem a few years ago touching on this point.

Of the first *Merrimac*, however, little is known; yet her career—at least at its inception—was quite as singular, if not as dramatic, as that of her sisters. It was a remarkable scene on that 12th of October, 1798, when the good people of Newburyport, Mass., and from the surrounding country for many miles, assembled on the banks of the Merrimac to witness the launching of the finest war-ship of her class in the United States that day—a craft they had built at their own private expense to be pre-

Journal,

KEPT ON BOARD

THE UNITED STATES SHIP,

MERRIMACK;

OF TWENTY GUNS.

Moses Brown, COMMANDER.

Kept By

Joseph Brown.

Title page fac-simile of the Merrimack's log, reduced from 9 x 7 inches.

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sented, free of all immediate cost, to the nation.

It would not be an exaggeration to compare this scene with the supposititious spectacle of the sturdy people of Providence, R. I., to-day, building a modern cruiser of the *Montgomery* type at their own expense and presenting her to the Government to fight the country's enemies.

Our Government, in 1798, was sorely pressed for money and eagerly accepted the gift, so that the first *Merrimac* sailed for the West Indies January 3, 1779, where she remained—almost continuously at sea—until the termination of hostilities, which was in 1801. She captured four French privateers, recaptured a number of American and English merchantmen that were in the hands of French prize crews, was flagship in the expedition to Curaçao and rendered other important services.

Nearly all the details of this service have remained for over one hundred years a closed book to the public. Through the courtesy of the Hon. Moses Brown, of Massachusetts, a great-

grandson of Captain Brown, the original log-book of the *Merrimac*—a weather-stained volume, thirteen by eight inches, of one hundred and seventy pages—has been placed in the hands of the writer, and has thrown a flood of light on this "darkest period" of our navy's literature. It gives a detailed account of captures and recaptures and of the important convoy service in which she was engaged.

Among the many items of historical importance that have been brought to light in this work it would be unfair to pass over that of the capture of the English provision ships *Sukey* and *Friends* by seventeen men in whaleboats out of Newburyport, as described in Chapter II. The deed was daringly conceived and cleverly executed. Trivial as the affair might seem at first glance, it was the repetition of such captures that made the carrying on of war in America an exceedingly complex problem for British commanders. The author is not aware that any mention of this plucky enterprise has ever before been given, formally, to the public.

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer has taken the liberty of making maps to cover the geographical points of every few chapters. Although most of the names mentioned in the narrative are familiar, interest in the story is enhanced by having the points clearly indicated in simple maps interspersed here and there in the text.

In conclusion, the writer desires to acknowledge the assistance he has received in gathering material for this work, from the late Emily Adams Getchell, the Hon. Moses Brown, Mr. Causten Browne, Mr. George P. Tilton, Charles Wellesley Allen and Mr. William H. Swasey.

E. S. M.

New York, *December*, 1903.

MOSES BROWN—CAPTAIN U. S. N.

CHAPTER I

OUR UNKNOWN NAVAL HEROES

IN his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," Thomas Gray speaks feelingly of the unknown master minds, the unborn heroes, the unheralded orators and the unappreciated statesmen who lived and passed away in obscurity because elusive opportunity—that sudden chance which comes but once in a lifetime and, if embraced, carries men to the pinnacle of fame—either did not visit them or was not recognized at the supreme moment.

The same lines of this Elegy may easily be applied to the great body of men who have composed the *personnel* of the United States Navy in the last one hundred and twenty-five years. It has been said by those who are competent to

pronounce authoritatively on the subject, that where there was but one John Paul Jones and one Nicholas Biddle in our navy known to the public during the war for independence, there were dozens known to their brother officers; that where there was only one Thomas Truxtun, only one Richard Dale and only one George Preble in our wars with France and Tripoli, there were among the navy officers who fought with them much of the stuff of which Nelsons, Collingwoods, and Farraguts were made; that where the public knew of only one David Porter, one Stephen Decatur, one William Bainbridge, one Oliver Hazard Perry, one James Macdonough and one Charles Stewart in the war of 1812, these same master-minds knew among their shipmates scores of officers who failed to emerge from comparative obscurity only because Dame Opportunity was unkind to them.

And so we could go on through the entire one hundred and twenty-five years of our Navy's glorious career. There were scores of unknown Farraguts, Porters, Wordens, Winslows in our

maritime struggle with the South, and that there were not scores of Deweys in our conflict with Spain was simply because there were not scores of opportunities.

"Opportunity," that wonderful lodestone which points out the path to immortal fame, is the illusive will-o'-the-wisp sought by the professional sailor from the time he enters upon his novitiate to the day he finally lays down the burden of professional duty. It is a mysterious phantom which he pursues in his work by day and in his dreams by night; constantly in his mind, seldom seen but once in the longest professional careers—in too many cases never at all—yet ever before him like the *mirage* tormenting the throat-parched traveler in the desert, ever urging him onward with tantalizing persistency in the dreary performance of monotonous, soul-trying routine of daily professional life.

It has been on account of this maddening desire to seize opportunity that officers and men in the service have been impelled to approach closer

to the verge of actual insubordination—in some cases boldly refusing to obey the strictest orders of their superiors, even to the extent of incurring the death penalty—than for any other motive.

We recall the pathetic answer of a seaman of the Revolution who, on being rebuked for taking it upon himself to lead a party of boarders on the enemy's deck, said: "I—I—jes' couldn't help it, sir." We turn with pride to the episode of the slender Philadelphian youth who—against the sternest commands—smuggled himself aboard the ketch *Intrepid* when starting on her mission of extreme peril into the harbor of Tripoli, "merely because I wished to see the parts." We remember the bold defiance of Captain Isaac Hull, who sailed out of Boston in 1812 against the orders of the Secretary of the Navy—an act for which he might easily have been shot—and began that series of brilliant victories over the British on the high seas which made American naval prowess feared and respected the world over.

BRAVING ALL ESTABLISHED RULES

Farragut's determination to run his frail wooden ships past the Confederate forts below New Orleans and the hell-barriers that stretched across the river, in the dead of night, was against the urgent advice of some of his highest officers and in utter defiance of all, then, recognized rules of naval warfare. Had that extraordinary venture terminated disastrously, Farragut undoubtedly would have been summarily removed from command—to await severer handling. Farragut's dash over the fatal line of torpedoes in Mobile Bay, two years later, which called forth that famous expression, "Damn the torpedoes!" was, in fact, a damning of all rules of propriety and professional caution.

It was Collingwood who, while leading the second line of the British fleet at Trafalgar, at a moment when his life was in imminent peril, exultantly exclaimed: "What would Nelson give to be here!" while Nelson, about the same moment, remarked, "See how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into action!" Each

was reveling in the opportunity then within grasp.

Dewey's midnight entry into the harbor of Manila was regarded by nearly all the European naval experts then in the East as rash and imprudent, while Commander Miller's fiery expostulation against Sampson's order, depriving him of the command of the collier *Merrimac* at a moment when opportunity was within reach, bordered seriously on one of the gravest of military offenses.

It was to seize these fleeting chances of "getting at the enemy," thereby winning distinction, that these and scores of other officers have braved tradition, spurned sound advice and courted the severest penalties of the service.

In the careers of Paulding and Farragut we have a striking illustration of the fickleness of opportunity. One became famous throughout the world, the other is scarcely known outside of the profession or, at least, beyond his native shores. Both were promising midshipmen (Paulding having the advantage of four

years), both distinguished themselves in two of the most sanguinary and important naval actions in 1814—Farragut on the blood-stained decks of the *Essex*, when she made her heroic defense against the British naval force off Valparaiso, and Paulding in the Battle of Lake Champlain. Young as these two lads were at that time, their conduct in battle could not have been surpassed.

On the close of the war both officers settled down to the soul-trying routine of naval life in the long years of peace which followed. Had it not been for the opportunity that favored Farragut in the Civil War, it is probable that his name, also, would have been quite as unknown to the world to-day as that of Paulding. Both officers served through the struggle with the Confederacy, but opportunity favored one and was unkind to the other—yet each had entered upon his long professional career with the rare advantage of a "baptism of blood."

It is because this class of "unknown naval heroes" has had so little recognition in the

annals of our country that the writer feels justified in giving the details of the career of Moses Brown. He was one of the first captains in the United States Navy, and can be taken as a fair type of our "unknown naval heroes."

It must not be inferred that because these "unknown heroes" did not win great battles or exploit themselves in some manner pleasing to the popular taste that their careers are devoid of interest. On the contrary, from the very nature of sea life, a long professional career is unusually rich in personal adventure, strange experiences in foreign parts and, not infrequently, replete with episodes of historical importance.

It is the province of sailors of long professional standing to narrate "true" salt-water yarns, expand on the peculiar situations in which they found themselves at times when aboard, dilate on episodes of international bearing and what not—and it is regrettable that so little of this material has been preserved for future reference and confirmation. Many offi-

cers of the old school kept diaries, logs, personal reminiscences, etc., in which appear records of national importance, as will be seen in the published journals of the two Trenchards, Rear-Admiral Philip and Moses Brown.

Like most of the intelligent seamen of his day, Moses Brown kept a diary covering the leading events of his stormy career, besides which there are personal letters written by him in foreign ports and the original log of the *Merrimac*, containing matter of more than individual interest. It is with this material, together with such side-lights as could be obtained bearing on the subject, that the writer has endeavored to frame a truthful picture of the life and adventures of one of our "unknown naval heroes" of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER II

NEWBURYPORT

QUAINT, old-fashioned, time-honored Newburyport, fondly embraced in a loving arm of the Merrimac River, can boast, probably, of more nautical exploits in the cause of American independence than any other contemporary seaport of the same population. It was off Newbury bar that one of the first "mortal blows" at British supremacy in the North American colonies was struck. On the morning of January 15, 1776, a daring party from this place captured a ship laden with eighty-six butts and thirty hogsheads of porter, sixteen hogsheads of sauerkraut, and twenty-three live hogs—destined for the British troops in Boston.

Trivial as this statement may appear to the casual reader, it was full of deadly portent to

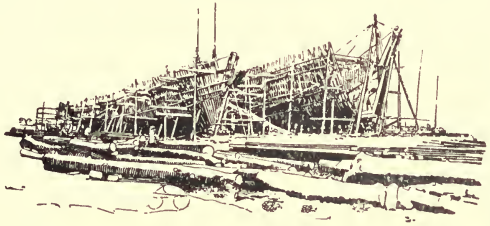
First Bridge
Across
Merrimac 1792

Anchorage of
Chain Bridge

And

Spire of
Meeting House
Built in 1801

Ship Yard



Harbour Scene

VIEWS OF OLD NEWBURYPORT.

the English commander-in-chief in America. He well knew that "A soldier cannot fight on an empty stomach"—and what was the doughty British redcoat without his porter and cheese, or the valiant Hessian deprived of his sauerkraut and pigs' knuckles? It may not be irrelevant to remark that sixty-two days after this important seizure—the British evacuated Boston.

The style in which this capture was made is worthy of all the traditions of New England shrewdness. The first prize brought into Newburyport in the war for independence was the brig *Sukey*, Captain Engs, from Ireland, bound for Boston. She was taken by the privateer *Washington*, and was carried into Newburyport, Monday, January 15, 1776.

Scarcely had the *Sukey* been made secure when another British ship was espied off Newbury bar. As she tacked off and on, showing English colors —the wind being easterly, with every appearance of a real old-fashioned New England snowstorm coming on—the shrewd people of Newburyport concluded that she had mistaken Ips-

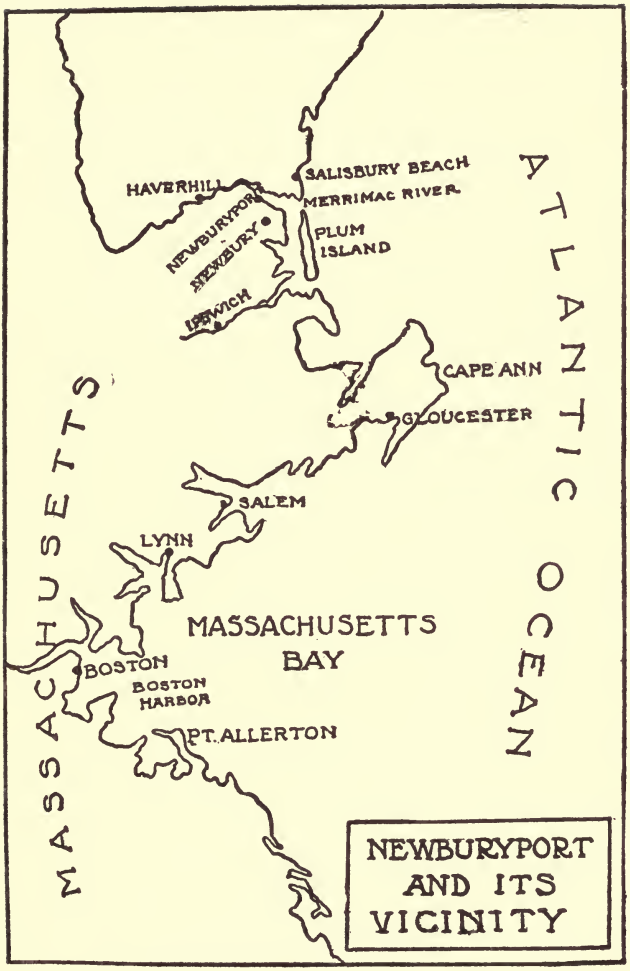
wich Bay for that of Boston. By putting "two and two together," they decided that it would be a good idea to visit her "in a purely sociable manner."

On a call for volunteers, seventeen men responded and, electing Offin Boardman their commander, proceeded to sea in three whaleboats—taking care to approach the stranger in as inoffensive a manner as New England prudence might dictate. On coming to close quarters, the adventurers were satisfied that they were right in their conjectures as to the ship being laden with provisions for the British army and had mistaken this port for that of the Hub.

Without the slightest sign of hostility, the boats moved within speaking distance and inquired from whence the ship hailed and whither bound. The answer was:

"The *Friends*, from London—bound to Boston. Where are you from and what land is this?"

With true Down-East nerve, Boardman answered:


HAVERHILL
SALISBURY BEACH
MERRIMAC RIVER
NEWBURYPORT
NEWBURY
PLUM ISLAND
IPSWICH
CAPE ANN
GLOUCESTER
SALEM
LYNN
MASSACHUSETTS BAY
BOSTON
BOSTON HARBOR
PT. ALLERTON
MASSACHUSETTS
ATLANTIC OCEAN
NEWBURYPORT AND ITS VICINITY

"We are from Boston. Do you want a pilot?"

Being answered in the affirmative, Boardman told them to heave-to and he would come on board. The British skipper, Captain Archibald Bowie, was only too willing to comply, as he had a leeward shore and there was every sign of a nasty night coming on. Boardman guided his boat alongside to the rope ladder which was lowered for him and passed up—unarmed.

Gaining the deck, the American shook hands with Archibald and with that molasses-like suavity which never fails your true-blue Yankee in an emergency—asked after his health, that of the crew, how the passage had been, the news from London and all other such pleasantries a pilot, with a six-guinea fee in view, might be expected to indulge in.

Intentionally, Boardman had completely engaged the attention of the sturdy British master so that the latter did not notice the sixteen other "pilots"—who had hastened on board, fully armed, directly after their leader—until

they had drawn themselves at "parade arms" across the deck; the British crew being forward and their officers aft.

Boardman now dropped his pleasant, fee-seeking blandishments and, to the astonishment of the Englishman, ordered the colors to be struck. The worthy skipper was too dumb-founded to obey but told his mate to perform that unpleasant task—incidentally suggesting that he "supposed the ship and her cargo now belonged to her captors but, at the same time, he hoped that neither he nor his crew would receive any personal injury." Evidently, the Briton's mind had been perturbed by the wild "Indian," "single-eye" and cold-blooded "massacre" stories that were so prevalent in England at this time.

On taking possession of their prize, the Americans found that she carried four carriage-guns, a crew of about fourteen men and was laden with fifty-two chaldrons of coals, eighty-six butts and thirty hogsheads of porter (the cheese must have been in the *Sukey*), twenty

hogsheads of vinegar, sixteen hogsheads of sauerkraut and twenty-three live hogs. With a fair tide and wind the captors brought the *Friends* to the wharf at Newburyport within six hours from the beginning of their venture.

But aside from this distinction of having struck the first "mortal blow at British supremacy in the North American colonies," Newburyport has the unquestioned honor of having sent out more privateers to harass English commerce in the Revolution than any other of our seaports—excepting, perhaps, Salem. Privateering in those days had not been raised to the high plane of "commerce destroying" of the nineteenth century and it is with some interest that we note the wording of the act under which these first private-armed cruisers were authorized to do evil unto others.

In November, 1775, the Provisional Legislature passed a resolution entitled: "An Act for Encouraging the Fixing out of Armed Vessels to defend the Sea Coast of America," etc.

This "Fixing out" resulted most disastrously for British mercantile interests and most profitably for the solid merchants of Newburyport. About ninety private-armed vessels were "fixed out" from Newburyport alone.

Among the most daring and successful of these privateersmen was Moses Brown—a typical New England seaman of those stirring times, a man born for the water, a man who died on and was buried in, water; and whose life has not been inaptly described as a "single, continuous, uninterrupted voyage."

He was of English ancestry, his line being traced back to Edward Browne, of Innbarrow, Worcestershire, England, whose son Nicholas in 1630 married in Lynn, Mass. The first four generations in America had a final "e" to the family name, but the fifth and sixth—Moses Brown being in the sixth—dropped it. Moses Brown's father was Edward Brown, who had been a captain in the French war and from whom Moses inherited his fine military instincts; and from his mother, Dorothy Pike, he received

those deep, quiet, unassuming religious traits which so strongly marked his character.

Moses Brown was born January 23, 1742, in that part of Salisbury, Mass., known as Ring's Island, near the Old Ferry Landing, where the river opens into the sea; and possibly his first "voyage" was in the old ferryboat.

Throughout his adventurous life he carried with him the highest ideals of morality. One of the officers who served under him in the United States sloop-of-war *Merrimac*, Midshipman Benjamin Whitmore, says: "Captain Brown was a brave man and a good disciplinarian. He exhibited much good feeling for the crew under his charge and was much respected by all his subordinates." He was exceedingly averse to the then common punishment of flogging in the navy and never, except when it was absolutely unavoidable from the emergency of the case, resorted to it.

He was equally remarkable for his efforts to inculcate temperate habits among his men; and the perfect neatness and order of his ship were

subject of common remark. At one time, in a foreign port, meeting another person bearing his own name, it became customary among the people to distinguish between them by calling Moses Brown, "Gentleman Brown."

Educational facilities being somewhat primitive at that period, Moses Brown, following the custom of the day, was bound out at the age of fifteen years as apprentice to Captain William Coffin, of whom Moses always spoke in terms of highest respect. According to the conditions of an apprentice's indenture in those days, all his earnings went to the master. Young Brown sailed on the first of his many voyages in October, 1757, in the sloop *Swallow* for Halifax, returning in November. In the following year, 1758, he made two voyages, one to the West Indies, in the same sloop, returning in June, and another, in the sloop *Ranger*, Captain Joseph Ingersol, to Louisburgh.

At that time Louisburgh was besieged by the English, and Moses got his first taste of

war. He says: "I tarried there some months till its surrender to the British army and then returned home in the schooner *Neptune*, Captain Lufsinson, in November."

That young Brown had rapidly risen in the estimation of his master is shown by the fact that, in the following year, Captain Coffin intrusted him with the sale of his schooner, the *Sea Flower*, in the West Indies. Coffin sailed from Newburyport in February, 1759, for St. Kitts, where the *Sea Flower* was sold, Brown taking her to St. Eustatius, discharging her cargo and, after delivering her up to her new owners, taking passage to St. Kitts (St. Christopher) and from thence in the schooner *Neptune*, Captain Staples, to Newburyport, where he arrived in May.

That Brown's career may well be termed "But a single, continuous, uninterrupted voyage" is emphasized by the fact that he made three more voyages before the close of this year, all of them to Halifax, returning to his home in Newburyport January 1, 1760.

Early in 1760, having been promoted to the rank of mate, he sailed in the *Sea Nymph* for St. Kitts, where the vessel was sold. Going to Nevis, he records that "We bought a sloop in which I came home to Newburyport with Captain Nathaniel Green. In July I sailed in the sloop *Ranger* for Boston and Louisburgh, and returned in twenty days; repeated the same trip in August. October 12th, I shipped aboard a schooner under Captain Edward Williams as mate for Quebec, which voyage was completed in seven weeks and returned to Newburyport."

To those young men of the twentieth century who think their lot, in starting in business, is a hard one, it will be a consolation (perhaps) to read the following INDENTURE by which many of their forefathers were bound out in servitude. We have not the original instrument with which Moses Brown was apprenticed but we have a copy of the regular formula used in those days, in this style of legal procedure and it, undoubtedly, covers the salient features of Moses Brown's apprenticeship. The orig-

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

inal is in the possession of Charles Wellesley Allen, of Brooklyn, N. Y., to whom the writer is indebted for the following copy:

This Indenture, WITNESSETH, That John Goedersoon, now aged fourteen years, eight months and twenty-seven days, by and with the consent of his step-father, John Wright, and his mother, Mary Wright, hath put himself and, by these presents, doth voluntarily and of his own free will and accord, put himself Apprentice to Frederick Seely of the City of New York, Cord-wainer [old-fashioned name for shoemaker], and after the manner of an Apprentice to serve from the day of the date hereof for and during, and until the full end and term of six years, three months and three days next ensuing; during all which time the said Apprentice his master faithfully shall serve, his secrets keep, his commands everywhere readily obey.

He shall do no damage to his said Master nor see it done by others, without letting or giving notice thereof to his said Master. He shall not waste his said Master's goods nor lend unlawfully to any. He shall not contract matrimony within the said term; at Cards, Dice or any unlawful game he shall not play, whereby his Master may have damages. With his own goods nor the goods of others, without license from his said Master . . . . He shall neither buy nor sell. He shall not absent himself, day nor night, from his said master's service without leave nor haunt ale-houses, taverns or play-houses; but in all things behave as a faithful Apprentice ought to do, during the said term.

And the said Master shall use the utmost of his endeavors to teach, or cause to be taught or instructed, the said Apprentice in the trade, or mystery, of a Cordwainer [shoemaker] and procure and provide for him sufficient meat, drink, washing, lodging and clothing fit for an apprentice, during the said term of service and four quarters of night schooling during the said term.

And for the true performance of all and singular the Covenants and Agreements aforesaid, the said parties bind themselves each unto the other firmly by these presents. IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said parties have interchangeably set their hands and seals hereunto. Dated the sixth day of August, in the thirty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America and in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and eleven.

Sealed and delivered in
the presence of
L. Cowdrey

Frederick Seely
John Goedersoon
Maria Wright
Jahan Wright.

CHAPTER III

HIS FIRST SEA FIGHT

IT was in the year 1761, when he was in his nineteenth year, that Moses Brown experienced the first of his many sea fights. He records that he "Passed a very agreeable winter (1760-1761) at home, taking care of and rigging the schooner *Phoebe*, in which I sailed in March, 1761, with Captain James Robinson in His Majesty's service for Halifax." England, at this time, was assembling a fleet with which to attack French possessions in the West Indies and it was to this expedition that Brown now found himself attached.

The account of his adventures—which so nearly resulted in his death—is given as follows: "The fleet having sailed for New York, was immediately watered by the king's ships lying there and was ordered to follow them, which

we did. On our arrival at New York we found the fleet lying in the Narrows. We went to the city, took in our wood and provisions and returned to the fleet; taking on board a company of Highlanders belonging to Fraser's regiment and sailed on the third of April for the West Indies."

Soon after leaving port the great fleet was overtaken by a violent gale, in which the little *Phoebe* became separated and continued on her passage alone. While in this precarious condition she fell in with two French privateers and, notwithstanding the odds against her, Captain Robinson began an action. Unfortunately, Brown does not give us the details of this fight further than to say that "Captain Robinson, our lieutenant and myself were wounded, besides several others; and seven of the crew were killed." Brown's injury was caused by a musket shot in his arm above the elbow.

Evidently the *Phoebe* managed to beat off her antagonists, for Brown records: "Two days

after we arrived at Guadeloupe I went into the hospital and remained there two months." Guadeloupe was captured from the French, April 27, 1759, by the English, and it remained a British possession until 1763. Meantime, the great fleet had captured Dominica and arrived at Pointe Pétré " where, in September, I got on board again, my wound being healed," and soon returned home.

But Brown was not permitted to remain idle for he had not been in Newburyport more than a few days when, in October, he sailed for Antigua, " where we spent some time and then took troops for the capture of Martinique and were ordered to Barbadoes to join the fleet." But in beating against the wind, in her endeavor to carry out this order, the *Phoebe* sprung her mainmast and, on being towed into Basseterre, St. Kitts, was discharged from Government service as unfit for duty.

After lying idle at this place some time, the *Phoebe,* in December, went to St. Eustatius and on the third of February, 1762, sailed for

SCENE OF SOME OF MOSES BROWN'S EARLY VOYAGES
NEW FOUNDLAND
GULF OF ST LAWRENCE
LOUISBURGH
QUEBEC
HALIFAX
ST GEORGES BANKS
PORTSMOUTH
BOSTON
C COD
MARTHAS VINEYARD
NEW YORK
LONG ISLAND
PHILADELPHIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORFOLK
BERMUDA ISLANDS
CAPE LOOKOUT
CHARLESTON
SAVANNAH
GULF OF MEXICO
NASSAU
BAHAMA ISLANDS
HAVANA
CUBA
CAPE FRANCOIS
HAITI
PORT AU PRINCE
JAMAICA
VERA CRUZ
YUCATAN

home. But ill luck still clung to the unfortunate *Phoebe*, for Brown writes: "After beating on the coast [of New England] for some time and provisions being scant, we put off and arrived in St. Kitts in April [nearly two months after leaving St. Eustatius for their homeward passage] where we careened and refitted the vessel and took a freight of rum for Portsmouth. Sailed on the 6th of June and in the same month arrived in Newburyport after a tedious voyage of sixteen months."

The "tedious voyage of sixteen months," however, did not prevent Brown from again getting on his favorite element for, in the same month of his return home, June, he again sailed in the *Phoebe* with Captain Lowell for Antigua where the cargo was sold and she proceeded to St. Martin. At this place they loaded with salt and sailed for home, arriving at Newburyport in December.

It was in June, 1763, that Moses Brown completed his apprenticeship but there being "little business during the winter I tarried at

home." In April, however, he shipped with his old master, Captain Coffin, in the *Phoebe*. "Went eastward and loaded for the West Indies, and returned home from Guadeloupe in December."

About this time (1764) British revenue cutters were unusually vigilant—and, in many cases, were unnecessarily harsh—in checking a smuggling trade that had sprung up along the coast. Believing that the taxes imposed upon them by the mother country were unjust, the spirited colonists saw no wrong in running in their cargoes, whenever they could, without paying the duty. Brown, like most of his profession, felt no scruple in evading these taxes for he records: "In March, 1764, sailed again in the *Phoebe* for Guadeloupe and arrived in Newburyport in July. Smuggled our cargo and went to the eastward for a load of wood and returned again in August."

One of Moses Brown's characteristics was his fondness for children. It is said of him that frequently he would go with them in their ex-

cursions on water; and at his Thanksgiving festival would have a lot of them at his table in preference to any other company.

This trait is clearly brought out in a letter Brown wrote while in command of the United States sloop-of-war *Merrimac* in our naval war with France. It was written to the wife of his son William, the spelling and punctuation being as near the original as possible:

Merrimack at sea. febuary ye — — 1799

My dear Child this will serve to inform you I am well hope this will find you and all our family conections the Same my crew in generall are healthy. I have come from Martin(i)co through the islands to St. Thomases with a convoy of fifty Sail some of which I left at St. cruz and St. Thomases which last place I left with forty-two sail bound to diffnt parts of America— — you may think there is an honnor in this business but there is more Trouble to keep them together— — on leaving my convoy I shall Return to my Station to windward as my Ship Sails fast— I donte expect much Idle bread I have been but four days at a time in port since my Arival at ye Rendzvous— my kind Regards to all fri(e)nds and am yr Affec father

M. Brown

My blessing on yr little pratlers
tell them Granpah hante forgot them.

NEARLY BURIED ALIVE

Moses had now entered upon his twenty-third year and, having accumulated a moderate sum of money, he married Sarah Coffin of Newburyport, September 6, 1764. After a honeymoon of one week he sailed in the sloop *Merrimac*, Captain William Friend, for Antigua. The round voyage was completed in eight weeks and returning to Newburyport he spent the winter with his wife and friends. In April, 1765, he sailed for Martinique, again under Captain Friend, and returned to Newburyport in September. It was in the following voyage, begun in December, that Moses Brown came as near entering Davy Jones' locker as any man ever did—and return alive.

On his passage home from Martinique, April, 1766, he was taken with the smallpox. The disease made such rapid progress that when he was several days from home the patient was pronounced dead. His body was sewed canvas, heavy shot were attached to his feet so as to insure sinking and the body was placed on a board which protruded out of a gun port

ready to slide its freight into the sea. A crude burial service was read over the remains and the word had been given to uplift the inboard end of the plank when Captain Friend thought he detected signs of life through the coarse covering. He shouted out:

"Belay there, my lads! That man is not dead!"

Hastily cutting open the canvas they were soon convinced that Brown was not dead and, taking him to his berth, they nursed him back to health.

Nothing daunted by this "close call," Moses continued his voyages to various parts of the West Indies, with an occasional run up to Halifax for coal. Early in 1768 he had a decidedly unpleasant experience in his ill-starred craft —the *Phoebe*. He had loaded with fish and had sailed for the West Indies, February, 1768, and when some days out his vessel sprang aleak, so that he was obliged to cut open his hogsheads and throw the fish into the sea; there being six feet of water in the hold. With diffi-

culty he managed to reach Nevis and returned to Newburyport with a whole skin.

From this time on, until the beginning of hostilities with the mother country, his venturesome voyages were made with varying success, mostly to the West Indies. Under date of January, 1772, he notes: "Sailed again for Port au Prince. On the passage I lost my bowsprit and eleven horses. Arrived at Port au Prince and found the port closed against the English. Entered in distress and after the usual ceremonies got permission to sell my cargo, which I did and took in a cargo of molasses and returned home.

"My owner's son choosing to go in the vessel, I quit and tarried at home three months. In September I sailed in the brig *Martha* for the West Indies and returned in December. Got ready for sea again but was taken sick with measles—the brig went and left me."

It was in September, 1773, that Moses Brown sailed on a voyage that—like many others—came near being his last. While on the pas-

sage from St. Eustatius his craft sprang aleak and took in such large quantities of water that in half an hour she sank. Captain Brown had scarcely time in which to lower a boat and save himself and men. For seven days the frail shell was tossed about on the vast expanse of the Atlantic; the men having left the ship so hastily that they did not get an adequate supply of provisions. When reduced almost to the last extremity they were picked up by the schooner *Polly,* Captain Andrew May, from Philadelphia. The castaways were landed at St. Cruz from which place Brown took passage in a sloop for Rhode Island, arriving at Martha's Vineyard in December. From this place he proceeded in the brig *Marigold,* Captain Jonathan Parsons, on the passage to Newburyport "but, being cast away on Saquash Beach, I took my land tacks and arrived at home January 2, 1774, after an absence of fifteen months."

CHAPTER IV

IN THE LION'S DEN

FROM the foregoing sketch of the early career of Moses Brown it will be seen that his preparation for the high and responsible duties of commander in a war-ship had been thorough and practical—if not academic.

At the time hostilities broke out between the American colonies and the mother country Moses Brown found himself on the other side of the Atlantic, and in a peculiarly dangerous position. The style in which he extricated himself from impending danger is worthy of the best traditions of John Paul Jones and Gustavus Conyingham—his contemporaries.

In order to appreciate fully the situation we must go back a year or so to November 18, 1774, when he sailed for various ports in the

West Indies. On this venture he disposed of his cargo with very poor success. He had now visited nearly every sea mart on this side of the Atlantic and determined to try his luck—and at the same time gratify a natural desire to see more of the world—on the other side of the ocean. Accordingly he sailed for North Carolina, loaded with pipe-staves (staves for a wine barrel usually containing two casks), made his way to Cadiz, where he sold his cargo, and took on a freight of flour. From that port he went to "Matro, where I landed the flour and took ballast and returned to Cadiz."

Not finding a second freight at this place he purchased a load of salt and went to Falmouth, England, arriving there October, 1775; six months after the action at Lexington and four months after the battle of Bunker Hill. Fortunate it was for Moses that news traveled slowly in those days. Disposing of his cargo at this place he chartered his vessel to some British merchants to load with pilchards (a fish slightly larger than the herring) for Venice.

SCENE OF
MOSES BROWN'S
ADVENTURES
IN THE OLD WORLD
Seine R.
LIVERPOOL
AMSTERDAM
LONDON
DOVER
LIMERICK
FALMOUTH
L'ORIENT
BORDEAUX
VENICE
CEPHALONIA
C. FINNISTERRE
CORUNA
OPORTO
GIBRALTAR
LISBON
ST. MICHAELS
CADIZ
ALGIERS
ZANTE
MADEIRA Is.
TRIPOLI
SENEGAL R.
CAPE VERDE
Is.

Sailing from Falmouth, November 18th, Brown arrived at Venice in January, 1776, where he delivered his cargo and "spent ten weeks in seeing the shows of the city, it being carnival time and no business done."

While Brown was thus innocently enjoying some of the pleasures of life, Parliament enacted that all American property found on the high seas should be seized and condemned for the benefit of the British exchequer. Apparently, this was the first intimation Captain Brown had had of the seriousness of the rupture between the American colonies and the mother country. He had visited Falmouth and Venice without attempting to conceal his identity and now he was suddenly aroused from his dream of pleasure to find the hungry, wolfish eyes of rival carriers fixed upon his cozy brig.

As must have been apparent to the intelligent reader of the preceding pages, Moses Brown was not an ordinary man. He possessed, to a large degree, Yankee "resourceful-

ness"; added to which was a share of audacity which enabled him to leap out of the trap in which he so suddenly found himself. It was not his nature to dodge peril. Ordinarily we might have expected that he would have wiggled his craft out of the harbor of Venice under cover of night or by some other subterfuge and then have taken his chances of making his way safely to some American port.

This, however, was not after the style of Moses Brown. He boldly faced the peril and took the bull by the horns. Making a sham sale of his vessel he chartered her to load with currants at Zante and Cephalonia for London; actually arriving at the last port in July, 1776 —four months after the British had been driven out of Boston and a month after the Americans had repulsed Sir Peter Parker's fleet with such disastrous losses to the enemy at Charleston, S. C.!

Captain Brown, of course, learned of these momentous events while his tight little New England craft was snugly moored in the

Thames but, so far was he from being perturbed or alarmed, he records: "After delivering my freight I sold my brig for eight hundred pounds and spent two months in seeing the fashions of London"!

Having enjoyed his good English money to the extent of his desire, Brown took passage in the brig *Norton* for St. Eustatius from which place he proceeded to Philadelphia in a pilot boat commanded by George May—brother to Andrew May, who had rescued Brown and his crew from a watery grave when his ill-fated craft foundered at sea three years before. Captain Brown now learned, for the first time, that his kind rescuer, Andrew May, had ventured on another voyage and had not since been heard from.

After a brief stay in Philadelphia Brown purchased a horse and sulky and set out on a "land cruise," bound for New York. This short run of only ninety miles proved to be one of the most exciting and perilous voyages the weather-beaten mariner had yet made. He had

traveled thousands and thousands of miles over the sea but never before had made formal complaint about "roads being bad," though we know that at times he found the waves exceeding rough, not to say "topsy-turvy."

But it is ever different with an old salt when on land. Then your true-blooded sailor "lets himself loose." He feels that he has a right to find all the fault he desires and on this occasion Moses exercised his privilege to the fullest limit. He could steer his ship over mountain-like waves, in the heaviest gales, on the darkest night, with unerring accuracy and with unruffled temper. But with this kind of a land craft—a mere horse and sulky—he had no end of fault to find. "The roads," he declared, "were very bad." When Brown put his helm hard to port the obstinate nag persisted in taking the wrong direction. When Brown crowded on all sail for a quick run over a clear waste of land, the animal would gather stern-board. When the exasperated sailor trimmed

his yards to catch a spanking breeze, ten points off the quarter, the beast *would* go off on the opposite leg.

Brown does not say so in his diary but we can easily infer that the doughty sea-captain lost his temper with such unseaman-like tactics. The result was that the horse took matters in his own hoofs, kicked in the dashboard, capsized the sulky and threw Moses out with such force as to dislocate his right shoulder. Brown fails to record how he eventually reached home but he does say that this " land passage " from Philadelphia to Newburyport took seventeen days, he rejoining his family, December 21, 1776, in good time for Christmas, having been absent two years, one month and three days.

As Mr. Samuel Swett, in his sketch of Brown's life, observed, after noting his mishap with the nag: " And no doubt Captain Brown arrived at the same conclusion that an honest seaman did, who happened to be caught on shore at Edinburgh in a gale; and when the

tiles from the lofty roofs were rattling about his head, exclaimed, 'What a fool a man is to stay on shore in a storm, when he might go to sea and be safe.'"

CHAPTER V

FIRST COMMAND OF A WAR-SHIP

AT the beginning of our struggle for independence the New England colonies were especially active in fitting out armed craft for the avowed purpose of preying on British commerce. Continental Congress at Philadelphia, early in the war, authorized the capture of English vessels and property wherever found on the high seas. Colonial legislatures, on their own responsibility, took steps in the same direction while Washington himself, in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the American Army, issued commissions for several armed vessels, owned by Massachusetts, with a view to intercepting military supplies for the British at Boston and Quebec.

So successful were some of these ventures, in the first eighteen months of the war, that

nearly a regiment of British soldiers was captured on the high seas and a large quantity of war-like stores were diverted from their original destination to the use of the rebelling colonists.

At first the Americans sent out only small craft—any merchantman that could be hastily armed and fitted to attack the enemy. But as the war progressed a number of private vessels, especially adapted for the purpose, mounting from twenty to thirty guns and manned by crews numbering from one hundred to two hundred men—veritable corvets—were built and commissioned. In some instances these powerful ships made successful attacks on the regular cruisers of the royal navy.

A number of these war-ships were named after the leading American generals, such as the *General Arnold, General Hancock, General Mercer, General Mifflin, General Montgomery, General Pickering, General Putnam* and *General Washington.* The *General Arnold* belonged to Newburyport, from which place she

FIRST COMMAND OF A WAR-SHIP

was commissioned in 1778. Captain Brown's connection with her in her eventful career is modestly described by the hero in his diary.

As we have seen, Brown arrived at Newburyport after his tempestuous "land passage of seventeen days" from Philadelphia, December 21, 1776. "Finding our country all in arms, I tarried at home till April, 1777, when I took command of the brig *Hannah* and sailed for the West Indies. But in forty-eight hours we were captured by the British 32-gun frigate *Diamond* and, of course, I passed some time aboard a prison ship at Rhode Island."

How he got out of this confinement Brown does not state but it is inferential that it was by an exchange of prisoners for he says: "In July I returned home. In August I took command of the ship *General Arnold*, then at Portsmouth, N. H., for a voyage to Bordeaux." The *General Arnold* belonged to Nathaniel Tracy of Newburyport.

Captain Brown's first experiences with this private-armed cruiser were even more discourag-

ing than those he had faced in his brief career in the *Hannah*. His troubles began even before he sailed for he says: "Being ready for sea in November, I discovered that there was a conspiracy among my crew to murder me and all my officers and to take the ship to Halifax." Doubtless, there were British seamen in the *General Arnold's* complement who, with some of the unconscionable adventurers who were frequently found in almost every ship's company in those unsettled times, had conceived the idea of capturing the ship as soon as she cleared port and of turning her over to the enemy.

This seems the more plausible when we remember that British naval authorities on the North American station at that time held out special inducements for British sailors—and, in fact, to anyone who would perform the treachery—to rise on officers in American ships and seize the craft—a substantial reward being offered if they carried the prize into a British harbor or turned it over to an English naval force at sea.

Fortunately, Captain Brown detected the plot before it could be carried into execution and, throwing the ringleaders into prison, he sailed the *General Arnold* to Newburyport where he unloaded her, took off her upper deck and, placing eighteen 6-pounders aboard, fitted her out for a general privateering cruise. These extensive alterations occupied the winter of 1777-1778, so that it was not until in the following summer that she got to sea.

Of course, the first thing a prudent commander in a new war-ship would do was to make sure that his armament was in good condition. The eighteen 6-pounders Captain Brown had placed aboard had never been tested, so far as he knew, and with a view to trying them he ordered—soon after leaving port—the battery to be manned. The first gun that was fired burst, killing or wounding all of the officers.

It is in this disastrous incident that we have an illustration of the affection Captain Brown always managed to inspire in his worthy men

for himself. The episode is supplied by a man who was in the privateer at the time. One of the persons injured was an Irishman and, believing that his injury was fatal, he called for Captain Brown saying that he wished to speak with him. The Captain went below to see what his request might be when the man said that he knew he was going to die and begged that he might not be "thrown overboard like a dog" but might have prayers read over him. Captain Brown, after failing to inspire him with hope of recovery, assented to his request saying:

"Very well, Pat. I will tell Mr. Blank to read prayers for you."

It seems that this "Mr. Blank" was not popular with some of the crew and had especially aroused the ire of this Irishman. When Pat heard that this same "Mr. Blank" was to perform the last rites over him, he half rose from his bunk and remarked:

"No, faith, no! Then I shall not die; Mr. Blank shall never read prayers over me!"

Realizing that the man was in earnest in the matter, Captain Brown promised that he would read the prayers himself. With a gleam of satisfaction stealing over his honest features, Pat sank back on his rude couch and said:

"God bless ye, Captain. Then I'll die directly."

After such a disastrous experience with the battery on the first trial, there was nothing to do but to return to Newburyport and test the remaining guns under conditions where an explosion would harm neither the ship nor her people. This, accordingly, was done and, landing his armament, Captain Brown "proved" them with the result that four more burst. The remaining guns were then discarded and, securing new ones, Captain Brown, in August, again put to sea. After scouring the ocean for three months, in places where he was most likely to fall in with British merchantmen, he returned to Newburyport in November, 1778, having made only one prize, a brig; and that was retaken by the enemy before it could reach port.

CHAPTER VI

A "WARM BATTLE"

AMONG the papers left by Captain Moses Brown is an account of an action fought between the United States privateer *General Arnold* and a British armed ship which seems to have been entirely overlooked in our historical literature and official records. After exhaustive researches the writer has been able to gather sufficient corroborative material from independent sources, not only to clearly establish the fact that such a battle was fought but that the privateer was engaged in another action, of smaller importance, to be sure, but none the less valuable historically and of interest to the reading public.

So far as previously established accounts have gone, it is only known that on January 7, 1779, one of the newest and best of our armed

craft, the 20-gun brig *General Arnold,* Captain J. Magee, of Massachusetts, was driven ashore near Plymouth and seventy-five of her complement of one hundred and twenty men perished. This is the only authoritative record we have had of this formidable privateer. It is given in Lieutenant Emmons' "Statistical History of the United States Navy," published in 1850.

Lieutenant Emmons spent several years, under the direction of the Navy Department, in gathering all possible data bearing on our early navy, and published a most valuable compendium of our maritime career from the earliest records down to the date of publication. That he was entirely in error in regard to the *General Arnold*—though his work in general is remarkably accurate—is here shown most conclusively. From the data dug up in the Brown papers, and from other reliable sources, the writer is able to give a complete account of the interesting career of this vessel.

It was in his third cruise in the *General Arnold* that Captain Brown's perseverance, in

the face of appalling difficulties, enabled him to fight a battle that was highly creditable to his professional career and to the pluck and determination of the men under his command. Were we to rely on Captain Brown himself for an account of this brilliant achievement we would be left almost as much in the dark as before but, fortunately, we have several records from English sources and from eye-witnesses which throw a flood of light on these important sea fights.

In his diary Captain Brown modestly dismisses the incident in these few words: "In February [1779] I sailed on a third cruise in the *General Arnold.* After cruising four months, taking several prizes and fighting some warm battles, I was captured by His Majesty's ship *Experiment* of fifty guns, Sir James Wallace, commander, June [1779], and was escorted to Madeira, thence to Savannah in Georgia where I had my second degree on board a prison ship."

The journal of Thomas Greele, who was sail-

ing-master in the *General Arnold,* the "narrative" of Ignatius Webber, who was prize-master in the same vessel, and a copy of the official report of Captain Thomas Beynon (as published in an English newspaper of the day) who was commander of one of the British ships engaged, have been unearthed and throw some really valuable side-lights on this remarkable cruise which Captain Brown so modestly dismisses with: "taking several prizes and fighting some warm battles."

Instead of giving these various narratives separately the writer will endeavor to weave a continuous account of the venture in his own words. Thomas Greele gives us our starting point of this cruise when he entered in his journal: "February 25, 1779. Sailed from Cape Ann" and, in the next entry, under date of March 4th, he noted that: "Samuel Dyer, the cook, died."

Whether or not the early loss of the knight of the ship's galley was taken by the gallant tars in the *General Arnold* as presaging ill-

luck on this venture, we have no means of knowing. We do know, however, that among seamen of that day the sea-cook occupied a position of importance (in the estimation of the ship's company) second only to that held by the commander himself. No landlubber can fully appreciate the tender solicitude true-blue sailors have for the ship's cook. He was a privileged character and could take liberties which no other member of the crew would dare to attempt. The officers, and even the captain himself, were exceedingly deferential to this august person and when the United States cruiser *Reprisal* foundered at sea, 1777, all hands perishing excepting the cook, it was generally regarded among sailor folk as being another beautiful manifestation of a benign Providence. Singularly enough, in the action between the *General Arnold* and *Nanny,* the only person killed was the *Nanny's* cook.

At all events, the death of the *General Arnold's* cook did not check her quest for British gore; but it is somewhat remarkable that,

shortly after this loss, the brig began to develop alarming defects in her spars which, in a large degree, militated against her efficiency in the battle royal which was so soon to follow. On March 11th, seven days after Dyer's death, the mainmast was found to be sprung and two days later the foremast developed the same weakness.

In spite of these discouragements, Captain Brown continued to push his way over the Atlantic and, at six o'clock Sunday morning, March 28th, sighted land which proved to be St. Michael's of the Western Islands; distant nine or ten miles, bearing south-southeast. As the weather was a little hazy at the time, it had not been discovered until the ship was quite close inshore and about the same time a large sail was descried in the shadow of St. Michael's which immediately put about and gave chase to the venturesome privateer from the New World. Notwithstanding the fact that his two masts had been sprung—and consequently all his spars and rigging in a precari-

ous condition—Captain Brown, after having satisfied himself that the stranger was not a regular man-of-war, allowed her to draw near.

"At about ten o'clock," wrote Ignatius Webber, "she hove out English colors, we at the same time showing American. She began to fire bow chase guns. At eleven o'clock we came to a general engagement which continued about four glasses [two hours; but, according to the account of Sailing-Master Greele, the action lasted "two hours and fifteen minutes"] the *General Arnold* being the weathermost ship. Captain Brown had determined to bear down and lay her close aboard, notwithstanding the fact that she was greatly superior in force and bulk to the Yankee. We bore down upon her; she at the same time bore away with several of her guns disabled. She having greatly the advantage in sailing and Captain Brown, perceiving that she was going from us, ordered the guns to be well loaded and, rounding-to, gave her the contents of the broadside which raked her fore and aft."

It was here that the springing of the *General Arnold's* masts worked to her detriment for, although her spars and rigging had been badly cut up, Captain Brown was so well satisfied that he had defeated the enemy that he was anxious to continue the fight. He made every effort to again come within gunshot but was unable to do so, as the comparatively uninjured state of the stranger's masts and sails enabled her to escape.

All through the action it seems to have been the Englishman's aim to cripple the *General Arnold's* rigging while the American gunners devoted most of their attention to the enemy's hull; with the result that, while the Americans had scarcely a man killed or wounded, their rigging had been cut to pieces so they could make little headway in a chase. The Englishman suffered heavily in killed and wounded but his spars and rigging were almost intact.

Shortly afterward Captain Brown learned that his antagonist was the British privateer *Gregson,* from Liverpool, mounting twenty 12-

pounders and manned by one hundred and eighty men—nearly double the force of the *General Arnold,* which carried only 6-pounders. From an account published in an English newspaper the Americans learned that the *Gregson* had had her first lieutenant and seventeen men killed and a number wounded. The British commander reported that he had had a battle with "A rebel frigate of thirty-two guns and beat her off."

It certainly is an unbiased compliment to the efficiency of the *General Arnold's* gunners that they wielded their battery of 6-pounders against the 12-pounders of their opponent with such effect as to induce the commander of the *Gregson* to honestly believe that he had been fighting a 32-gun frigate. After the action, the *Gregson* put into St. Michael's to recuperate.

CHAPTER VII

A FORGOTTEN SEA FIGHT

ON the day following her desperate engagement with the privateer *Gregson*, the *General Arnold* hovered off St. Michael's at a distance of about nine miles hoping that her antagonist might come out and bring the fight to a finish. But in this Captain Brown was disappointed and, after having repaired his extensive injuries the best he could in the open sea, he resumed his search for British traders.

On April 4th he had the good fortune to fall in with the valuable English merchant ship *William*, John Gregory, master, which had recently sailed from Gibraltar bound for New York. Placing Samuel Robinson and a prize crew aboard, with directions to make the best of their way to a home port, the ships parted

company—the *William* arriving safely in Newburyport a few weeks later.

That the discipline of a regular man-of-war was maintained aboard the *General Arnold* is evidenced by the fact that a part of her crew were especially enlisted as "marines" or soldiers who serve aboard fighting craft to maintain order and to uphold the authority of the officers. Thomas Greele, in his journal under date April 7th, notes: "William Johnson, officer of the marines, died."

In nearly all New England seaports at this time a number of adventure-loving young men —usually of respectable parentage—were to be found who were ready to embark on any devil-daring enterprise that gave promise of excitement and pecuniary remuneration. They were generally known as "gentlemen sailors." As a rule they were proficient in the use of fire-arms, had more or less knowledge of infantry tactics and enlisted as "marines"—performing the customary guard duty while the drudgery of ship work was left to those who enlisted

as sailors. That the *General Arnold* had a regularly enlisted corps of "marines" aboard is evidence of her excellent arrangement and of the discipline maintained throughout the brig.

Under the same date Greele notes that "Thomas Brown fell overboard and was drowned" and, five days later, he adds: "William Cooper fell overboard—but we got him again."

On the 19th of April the *General Arnold* dropped anchor in the harbor of Coruña where she remained, replenishing her ammunition and repairing her damages, until May 19th when she again put to sea. For a month the privateer knocked about the broad Atlantic without falling in with anything worth taking but, at six o'clock on the morning of May 20th, with Cape Finisterre bearing southwest distant some twenty-four miles, a sail showed up above the horizon. In a moment all was attention and interest aboard the war craft as she pricked up her ears and prepared to crawl stealthily upon her supposed prey.

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AT CLOSE QUARTERS

It was not long before the swift-sailing American came within observing distance when it was evident that the stranger was an enemy. All doubt on this point was soon dispelled as she, soon afterward, showed English colors and the Americans responded with theirs. The two vessels seemed to be evenly matched and their commanders went through a series of maneuvers with a view to gaining the most advantageous position for beginning the attack. After this preliminary "sparring" had lasted a few moments the two ships came to close quarters, the first broadsides being almost simultaneous.

The Americans resorted to their old tactics of firing into the enemy's hull while the English aimed high and soon played havoc with the privateer's masts, spars and rigging. The accuracy and regularity of American gunnery have seldom been shown to better advantage than in this action. After a struggle lasting about an hour the stranger surrendered but she had been so riddled with shot, close to the water

line, that she sank in a short time after lowering her colors—her crew, numbering fifty-seven men all told, scarcely having time in which to get into their boats.

She proved to be the English privateer *Nanny,* of three hundred and fifty tons, commanded by Thomas Beynon, from Liverpool laden with coal for Oporto. She carried sixteen 9- and 6-pounders. That Captain Beynon had made a heroic defense is attested, not only by the circumstance that his own ship sank in a short time after her surrender but by the fact that he had inflicted irreparable injury on his antagonist. The *General Arnold's* foreyard had been shot away and was on the forecastle, while her mainmast, yards and rigging had been severely damaged. It really seemed fated that Captain Brown was destined to receive little but hard knocks with little remuneration on this cruise.

Nine days after the action, Captain Brown fell in with a Spanish brig bound for Cadiz and very kindly placed Captain Beynon and two

other prisoners aboard so they could report the engagement to the owners of the *Nanny*. In his official report of the action dated at Cadiz, June 2, 1779, Beynon gives a manly and graphic account of his misfortune, besides some interesting details of the way the Americans used "fire-pots" or large packages of powder hung at their yard arms which were to be dropped onto the enemy's deck when at close quarters and cause a conflagration.

Captain Beynon says: "On the 20th of May, when off Cape Finisterre, we saw a ship in pursuit of us and, being resolved to know the weight of her metal before I gave up your property, I prepared to make the best defense I could. Between eight and nine o'clock he came alongside with American colors and three fire-pots out, one at each end of his foreyard arm and one at his jibboom end. He hailed and told me to haul down my colors. I told him to begin and blaze away for I was determined to know his force before I gave up to him. The battle began and lasted two hours, our ships

being close together, having only room enough to keep clear of each other.

"Our guns told well on both sides and we were soon left destitute of rigging and sails. As I engaged under topsails and jib we were soon shattered below and aloft. I got the *Nanny* before the wind and fought an hour that way, one pump going till we had seven feet of water in the hold. I thought it then almost time to give up the battle, as our ship was a long time in recovering her sallies and began to be water-logged. We were so close that I told him I had struck and then hauled down my colors.

"The privateer [*General Arnold*] was in a shattered condition. Her foreyard was shot away and lying on the forecastle; a piece was out of her mainmast so that he could make no sail until it was fished; all her running rigging was entirely gone and a great part of her shrouds and back stays. None of her sails escaped injury except his mainsail. By the time we were out of the *Nanny* the water was up to

her lower deck. When Captain Brown heard of the small number of men I had he asked me what I meant by engaging him so long. I told him I was then his prisoner and hoped he would not call me to account for what I had done before I hauled down my colors. He said that he approved of all that I had done and treated my officers and myself like gentlemen and my people as his own.

"I had only two men wounded—and they with splinters. The cook, I believe, was drowned as he never came on board the privateer. Nothing was saved but the ensign and that was full of holes. We received sixty dozen musket shot from their marines, according to their own account, besides from their tops. The privateer had six men wounded and is the same that fought the *Gregson* of Liverpool. I was put aboard a Spanish brig, and arrived at Cadiz."

CHAPTER VIII

A PRISONER OF WAR

THE audacity of Captain Brown's attack on the *Nanny* is enhanced when it is learned that throughout the battle a fleet of sixty-eight English merchantmen, convoyed by eight ships-of-the-line and several frigates, were in plain sight. Three of the frigates made every effort to come upon the scene of action but, as the wind failed, they were compelled to remain helpless spectators of the drubbing the "impudent" Yankee was giving to their countrymen.

It was fortunate, indeed, for the *General Arnold* that lack of wind prevented the frigates from coming up with her. As it was, Captain Brown made all haste to repair his shattered spars and, under cover of night,

availed himself of a fine breeze and by morning had eluded the clutches of the fleet.

Resuming his search for prizes, Captain Brown, on the 30th of May, captured the British merchantman *George*, Captain Willicat, from Newfoundland for Oporto. Ignatius Webber was placed aboard the *George* with a prize crew and was ordered to Coruña. "About a week afterward," records Webber, "I had the ill luck to be taken by three English cutters from Dover bound on a cruise to the Mediterranean. They all went into Oporto with their prize, it being the first they had taken."

Three days after her capture of the *George*, the career of the privateer was cut short; she being captured by the 50-gun ship *Experiment*, Captain Sir James Wallace. It is related that when Captain Brown gained the deck of the *Experiment*, Sir James asked him if he was the "Captain of that rebel ship." Brown replied:

"I was very lately; you are now," and offered to surrender his sword. Captain Wallace refused to receive it, saying:

"I never take a sword from a brave man."

Sir James continued to extend every courtesy to his prisoner, treating him more as a guest. Taking Captain Brown into his private cabin, where he met other officers of the ship, a general conversation followed (over the traditional "glass of wine") upon the affairs of the two countries when Sir James proposed as a toast "His Majesty, King George the Third." It was rather hard for the doughty Yankee skipper to accept but he swallowed his wine without remark. Sir James now called on Brown for a return toast—thinking, from Brown's silence, that he had acquiesced in the sentiment and would respond with something of the like. Rising with much dignity and unawed by his position as a prisoner aboard a powerful enemy's war-ship, Captain Brown gave as a toast:

"His Excellency, General George Washington, the Commander-in-Chief of the American forces!"

The glass which Sir James had raised to his lips was hastily lowered and, turning fiercely on his prisoner, he asked:

"Do you mean to insult me, sir, in my own ship, by proposing the name of that arch rebel?"

"No," replied Captain Brown. "If there was any insult it was in your giving, as a toast, 'George the Third,' which, however, I did not hesitate to drink to, although you must have known it could not be agreeable to me who, at this moment, am a guest though a prisoner."

Sir James at once perceived that if there had been a breach of etiquette he had led the way and, like the honorable man he was, suppressed his anger and drank to that "arch rebel," Washington!

The *Experiment* escorted her prize to Madeira and from that place Sir James carried his prisoner to Savannah where Captain Brown was, for the third time, placed aboard a prison ship. Shortly afterward the *Experiment*

was captured by the fleet under Count d'Estaing.

In November Brown was released, through an exchange of prisoners, and proceeded to Charleston, S. C., where he took passage in the ship *Eustace*, Captain Bishop, for Boston. The *Eustace* had proceeded on this voyage far enough to sight Rhode Island Light when she met a succession of terrific northeast gales which actually blew her all the way to St. Eustatius in the West Indies. In these storms the ship frequently was in danger of foundering and, by the time she gained the West Indian port, she had lost fourteen of her original crew of thirty-one men.

Believing that he could make quicker time home by a different route, Captain Brown took passage from St. Eustatius in the brig *Sailor's Delight*, Captain David Coats, of Newburyport which vessel, after a fair run, put into Cape Ann Roads where Captain Brown landed, intending to make the rest of his way home by land.

A "LAND CRUISE"

Rough as Captain Brown's experiences had been at sea, he seemed fated to receive severer usage whenever he ventured to set foot on *terra firma*. We remember his stormy "land voyage" of seventeen days from Philadelphia to Boston, in which he and his horse could not agree—with the result that the gallant captain was thrown and had his shoulder dislocated. On this second "land cruise" Captain Brown again entrusted himself to the tender mercies of a horse—this time on its back. In the course of the "passage" from Cape Ann to Newburyport, the nag stumbled and, falling on Captain Brown, "bruised me very much."

Captain Brown comments on his arrival at Newburyport as follows:

"I arrived home after fourteen months, like the Frenchman at St. Eustatius, without money or goods; only one poor heart—and that was broken too."

CHAPTER IX

PERILOUS TIMES FOR MERCHANTMEN

WHAT was left of the winter of 1779-1780 was spent by Captain Brown in his cozy home in Newburyport and in April, 1780, he made a voyage in the brig *Mercury* to Amsterdam and returned in the, then, remarkably short time of four months—and in November he completed the round trip to Cape François in seventy days. The voyage to Amsterdam was repeated in 1781 and, in the following year, Brown was placed in command of the splendid privateer *Intrepid*, owned and fitted out by Nathaniel Tracy of Newburyport, carrying twenty 12-pounders and a complement of one hundred and sixty men and boys.

Captain Brown's first officer in the *Intrepid* was Lieutenant Henry Lunt of the United States Navy. Lunt had just returned to his

home in Newburyport after an absence of four years and seven months in the naval service. He had fought under John Paul Jones in the famous *Bonhomme Richard-Serapis* battle and was with Jones in the *Alliance* and *Ariel.* When Lunt left Philadelphia, in the winter of 1781, for his home he took with him an open letter of recommendation from Captain Jones and the owner of the *Intrepid* was glad to secure him.

Soon after the *Intrepid* sailed, John Paul Jones himself came to Newburyport to inquire after his second lieutenant, Mr. Lunt, wishing to induce him to again enter the navy as a lieutenant in the splendid 74-gun ship-of-the-line *America,* then nearly completed at Portsmouth. Captain Jones expressed much regret at not finding him. The *America,* subsequently, was presented to France in compensation for the 74-gun ship *Magnifique,* which had been lost in Boston harbor. Jones and Lunt were so nearly of the same size that their clothes fitted each other.

Although so heavily armed and manned, it

was not intended to have the *Intrepid* go on a general cruise; her mission being to transport a cargo of drygoods valued at half a million dollars from l'Orient, France, to Baltimore. It was an errand of unusual danger. Cut off from their ordinary supplies from the Old World, the colonists experienced difficulty in securing the ordinary necessities of civilization. Nearly all of our regular cruisers had been captured or destroyed so that the only avenue of communication with the outside world was by means of a few heavily armed, fast-sailing craft which were specially prepared to make quick runs to and from foreign ports.

The war with England was still on and (though British commerce had been almost swept from the seas) English cruisers were swarming about our ports and coast, eager to intercept and punish the daring seamen who had occasioned them such unprecedented injury. It was Captain Brown's duty to slip through the meshes of network the Admiralty had woven about our coast, elude their swiftest cruisers

on the high seas, gain the French port and bring the precious cargo to Baltimore in safety. This difficult task was safely accomplished in the summer and fall of 1782, much to the gratification of the privateer's owners.

Although the cessation of hostilities between England and the colonists relieved our seamen of much of these exciting war conditions, the times, for several decades afterward, were greatly unsettled. Acts of unwarranted severity and absolute outrage on the ocean were frequent so that our mariners were compelled to be almost as much on their guard as when the war was on. Captain Brown discovered this several times, to his sorrow.

In April, 1783, he carried the *Intrepid* to Havana, where the vessel was sold, when Brown took passage in a brig for Boston but was wrecked off Cape Lookout, S. C., and nearly perished. Making his way to Beaufort and thence to New York, he was in time to witness the evacuation of that city by the British.

Not only on the high seas but in friendly

ports our merchantmen were subjected to unjust proceedings. Early in 1784, Captain Brown navigated the brig *Wexford* to Limerick, Ireland, where she was seized " and kept six months in the law which cost four hundred guineas (over two thousand dollars) with a loss of a part of the cargo." After getting clear of the land-sharks, Brown returned to Newburyport *via* Lisbon.

In the year 1785, Brown made voyages to the West Indies and two more in the following year. The hardy sailor now planned a more ambitious voyage than any he had yet undertaken—India being the goal on which he fixed his eye. He says: " Some change taking place in Mr. Tracy's[1] business, I tarried at

[1] From 1775 to 1783 Nathaniel Tracy was principal owner of one hundred and ten vessels, aggregating over fifteen thousand tons which, with their cargoes, were valued at $2,733,300. Twenty-three of these vessels were letters-of-marque, mounting two hundred and ninety-eight carriage guns, and registering sixteen hundred and eighteen men. Of this one hundred and ten sail but thirteen were left by the end of the war, all the rest having been taken by the enemy or lost. Tracy was also

home until the winter of 1787 when the brig became the property of Mr. John Lane, of London. He fitted her out for the Isle of France but we stopped at Senegal and found the garrison in want of provisions. We sold our cargo and went to Buena Vista and loaded with salt and returned to Boston where I quit her and returned to Newburyport in September, to take charge of the ship *Hercules*, then in the stocks belonging to the same owner.

"In October we launched her and in Janu-

the principal owner of twenty-four cruising (privateers) ships, the combined tonnage of which was over six thousand, carrying three hundred and forty guns, 6-, 9- and 12-pounders, and navigated by twenty-eight hundred men. "When it is considered that these were in addition to the letters-of-marque, it exhibits Mr. Tracy as a naval, rather than a merchant, prince."

But of these twenty-four cruisers, only one remained at the close of the war. Nevertheless they had not been idle, nor were they ignobly surrendered. These ships captured from the enemy one hundred and twenty sail, amounting to over twenty-three thousand tons which, with their cargoes, were sold for $3,950,000 and with these prizes were taken two thousand, two hundred and twenty-five prisoners of war.

ary, 1788, went to Portsmouth, loaded with masts and sailed in March for London with a view to going from thence to India. But Mr. Lane's partner, not liking the plan, it was given up and the ship was chartered for the Cape de Verde Islands, where I went and loaded at the Isle of May and returned to Boston in October. I went home to my family, the ship being laid up with the salt on board. In November I received a letter from Mr. Alexander Moore, who was agent for Mr. Lane, requesting me to come to Boston and take charge of the ship for another India voyage but, as I had spent two years, and made nothing for my trouble, and the voyage being uncertain as to its length, I quit and gave her up to my first officer, Mr. Patrick Fletcher [afterward a captain in the United States Navy. He commanded the 40-gun frigate *Insurgent* in 1800, when that ill-fated vessel sailed on a cruise and was never after heard from], of Boston and returned home—throwing myself once more on the wide world for employment to earn bread for myself

and family. After lying ahull for some time and seeing nothing to advantage, I thought it time to call all hands and veer ship and make sail in chase of Industry, from which I have always found a sufficiency to feed and clothe my family."

In a short time Captain Brown purchased "a small part of the brig *Essex*" and sailed in her for Surinam, January 25, 1788, with a small cargo of fish and lumber, "one-eighth of which was my all, having met with many crosses, losses and disappointments in life. I made this voyage with some success and returned to Boston in June when I sold my cargo and returned to Newburyport, where I found my eldest son whom I had not seen in seven years."

The peculiar hardships of seafaring life in those days are well illustrated in the last words of the above quotation: "My eldest son, whom I had not seen in seven years." This son, also, had followed the sea and had been fairly successful—as success was estimated among seafaring people. That the father and son had

not met in "seven years" is not surprising. The average voyage in those days was from two to six months—some of those undertaken by Captain Brown had lasted over two years—while the visits home were from two to six weeks so we can easily understand how the son's visits home came at a time when the father was away.

The final entries in Moses Brown's diary are full of pathos. In these notes we can see the good man nearing that stage of life when human clay begins to show its weakness, when the encroachments of time, hardships, disease and care alarmingly assert themselves in the frail body that encases the soul while on earth: "thirty-two years of toil, trouble and almost death," as he expressed it. Yet, although weighted down with cares and disappointments, we detect the indomitable spirit and courage of the man's soul breaking through all mortal barriers in a ringing, triumphant note when he records: "It being folly for a person with spirits like mine to despair, I started out again

on this present voyage the 2d of December, for Surinam and am this day, December 18, 1789, in latitude 27° 30′ N.; and longitude 49° 30′ W., with a fine breeze west-southwest—and may the blessing of God attend this voyage."

On the 13th of January, 1790, Captain Brown arrived safely in the Surinam River and went up to Paramaribo, where he found the market very dull. He says: "I sold my cargo and on the 15th got my vessel up and found some of my fish damaged. On Saturday, January 23d, being the forty-eighth anniversary of my birth, Captains Willis, Wheelright and Holland, all of Newburyport, dined with me."

Having experienced many fatiguing delays, Brown, after three months spent in this port, completed his cargo and sailed for home April 14th. This is the last entry in Captain Brown's diary. His subsequent career as a merchant commander and as a captain in the regular navy during our naval war with France, is gathered from records left by his contemporaries.

PERILOUS TIMES

On another page, as if in conclusion to the sketch of his life, Captain Brown makes the following comments and enters a few lines of verse:

A man of fortune is like a tree loaded with fruit which people crowd about till it is all off, and then pass it unnoticed to another.

What is our God, or what his name,
Nor man can learn, nor angels teach.
He dwells concealed in radiant flame,
Where neither eye nor thought can reach.

ON LOSING SOME TEETH.

How weak the prison where we dwell,
Flesh's but a tottering wall,
The breaches every day foretell
The house must shortly fall.

And happy those who are prepared for the dissolution.

MOSES BROWN.

In no place in Brown's diary or in any other document do we find mention made of his command of the 22-gun privateer *Minerva*. Emmons, in his "Statistical History of the United States Navy," enters the *Minerva* as a 16-gun

THE CONGRESS
Of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
To ALL to whom these Presents shall come, send GREETING.

KNOW YE,

THAT we have granted, and by these presents do grant licence and authority to Moses Brown ——— Mariner, Commander of the Ship ——— called the Minerva ——— of the burthen of Two hundred and Twenty ——— tons or thereabouts, belonging to Nathan[illegible] ——— and ——— Merchants of ——— in the County of ——— and Commonwealth of Massachusetts ——— mounting Six ——— carriage guns, and navigated by Forty ——— men, fitted out and set forth the said Ship ——— in a warlike manner, and by and with the said Ship ——— and the officers and crew thereof, by force of arms, to attack, subdue, seize and take all ships and other vessels, goods, wares and merchandizes, belonging to the Crown of Great-Britain, or any of the Subjects thereof, (except the ships or vessels together with their cargoes belonging to any Inhabitant or Inhabitants of Bermuda, and such other ships or vessels bringing persons, with intent to settle within any of the said United States, which ships or vessels you shall suffer to pass unmolested, the Masters thereof permitting a peaceable search, and giving satisfactory information of the lading and their Destination,) or any other ships or vessels, goods, wares or merchandizes to whomsoever belonging, which are or shall be declared to be Subject of capture by any Resolutions of CONGRESS, or which are so deemed by the Law of NATIONS. And the said ships and vessels, goods, wares and merchandizes so apprehended as aforesaid, and as prize taken, to bring into Port, in order that proceedings may be had concerning such captures, in the Form of Law, and as to Right and Justice appertaineth. And we request all Kings, Princes, States, and Potentates, being in Friendship or Alliance with the said United States, and others to whom it shall appertain to give the said ——— vessel, company and prizes. All aid, assistance and succour in their Ports, with this said Moses Brown ——— WE, in the name and on behalf of the Good People of the said United States, engaging to do the like to all the Subjects of such Kings, Princes, States and Potentates, who shall come into any Ports within the said United States; and We will and require all our officers whatsoever, to give to the said Moses Brown ——— all necessary aid, succour and assistance in the premises. This Commission shall continue in force during the pleasure of the CONGRESS, and no longer.

IN TESTIMONY whereof, We have caused the Seal of the Admiralty of the United States to be affixed hereunto.

WITNESS His Excellency Samuel Huntington ——— Esquire, President of the CONGRESS of the United States of America, at Philadelphia ——— this Twenty fourth day of February ——— in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and Eighty one ——— and in the fifth ——— year of our Independence.

Passed the Admiralty Office,

Wm. Brown Secretary to the Board of Admiralty.

Sam[d]. Huntington President

Fac-simile (reduced from 12 x 16 inches) of the privateer Minerva's commission. For explanation and wording see Appendix I.

brig of sixty men of New Hampshire and commanded by M. Brown. We give, in this work, a facsimile reproduction (reduced one-tenth from the original) of Captain Brown's commission, dated February 24, 1781, and signed by Samuel Huntington, President of the United States Congress, which shows plainly enough that he was in command of such a ship—though it is probable that he did not get to sea with her except for a short run from one port to another.

There is a singular clause in this as in nearly all commissions issued by Congress, namely, that no cargoes or vessels belonging to the inhabitants of Bermuda should be molested.

CHAPTER X

TRADING UNDER DIFFICULTIES

IN spite of his poor luck at Surinam, as narrated in the last chapter, Captain Brown made several more voyages to that port. On his return from his last trip he was afflicted with a "very dangerous abscess in his thigh" and, during his convalescence, the brig was fitted for Port au Prince in charge of his son William.

Returning from that place with a freight for Baltimore the brig was captured by an English privateer and carried into New Providence, on the island of Nassau, where she was detained some months because a part of her cargo was declared by some official to be French property.

It was on such flimsy pretexts as this that many honest American merchantmen were seized by English authorities and, after being de-

tained for months in litigation on mere "suspicion,"—at ruinous loss to their owners,—were released "on a mistake in detention." In many cases the "suspicion" on the part of British authorities amounted to nothing else than a desire to discourage "carrying trade" in American bottoms and, in this instance, it evidently was a malicious desire on the part of the Nassau officials to hamper the Yankees as common carriers. Captain Brown's son notes that the brig "finally proceeded to Baltimore and thence to Newburyport after making a poor voyage. After some repairs the brig was sold."

Not discouraged by his Surinam experiences Captain Brown, with Mr. Anthony Davenport, purchased the schooner *Hannah* of ninety tons and loaded her for the South American port—his son Joseph, then twenty years old, going in her as cooper; it being his first voyage. The *Hannah* sailed early in December, 1794, and four days after leaving port encountered a heavy gale and shipped a sea while scudding

before the wind which washed the mate and two men overboard. "As we were reefing the foresail," notes Joseph Brown, "the mate and one man were caught in the bag of the sail, which hung alongside, and we saved them. But one man (Moses Bennett) was lost. This was about three o'clock in the morning when it was pitch dark and a very heavy sea was running."

The *Hannah* made a fairly profitable voyage and returned to Boston in May, 1795, where her cargo was sold and she proceeded to her old home in the Merrimac.

In the following July the brig sailed for Guadeloupe. When in a dangerous part of the West Indies she encountered a heavy squall which, in spite of the utmost exertions of her crew, threw her on the reefs. As the channel was intricate it became necessary to throw the deck load of lumber into the sea.

When the weather moderated, the crew—with the assistance of thirty negroes—landed the cargo and in two days succeeded in getting the brig afloat, when she proceeded to Point Pétré.

As the French officials would not allow the Yankees to sell their cargo at that place it was taken aboard again to be carried back to New England.

On the passage home, when the *Hannah* was nearly on soundings off the southeast part of St. George's Bank, she was captured by the English privateer *Dove*, Robert Tucker, master, of Bermuda. Placing a prize crew aboard the *Hannah* the *Dove* made sail for her home port but, owing to very severe weather and heavy gales, the passage was protracted. Before reaching port Captain Brown was taken down with fever and, at one time, his life was despaired of.

There were no surgeons aboard vessels of this class in those days but, usually, some member of the ship's company was selected because of his greater familiarity with medicine and drugs. The mate of the *Hannah* was the amateur physician on this cruise and Captain Brown asked that he be allowed to attend to him. Captain Tucker, however, had already

placed the mate aboard the privateer for safe keeping and would not permit him to again go aboard the *Hannah*.

While the *Dove* and her prize were yet some days from port they became separated in a violent gale and did not meet again until they reached Bermuda. For several days young Joseph Brown was alone with his sick father aboard the *Hannah*, with only one small boy, three whites and two negroes, under the charge of a drunken prize-master named Newbold. It was only by the most unremitting efforts that the *Hannah* was saved from foundering and finally brought into port.

Here the *Hannah* was detained three or four months to await the decision of the courts. The vessel and her cargo were finally most unjustly sold at auction. Captain Brown bought the vessel for eight hundred dollars and drew on his partners for the money, giving a bottomry bond on the vessel for security. The *Hannah* then returned to Newburyport by way of Martha's Vineyard.

SOUTH AMERICAN VOYAGES

Captain Brown made several more voyages to the West Indies and South America until the naval war with France broke out when he began his career as a captain in the regular navy.

CHAPTER XI

PREPARING FOR WAR WITH FRANCE

ALTHOUGH peace between the colonies and the mother country was proclaimed in the United States April 11, 1783, our merchantmen, for a number of years afterward, found that they were almost as much harassed on the high seas as before. This was owing largely to our legislators making the serious mistake of attempting to secure maritime rights abroad without an adequate navy to maintain those claims.

The total number of regular Continental warships in the Revolution (not including privateers or the flotilla on Lake Champlain) was forty-seven, carrying a total of one thousand guns. By the time peace was declared, of these forty-seven war craft only three remained and these were quickly disposed of, so that from

1783 to 1797 the country was without naval protection; for even the officers and sailors had been discharged and had sought new fields of activity.

The folly of such "economy" soon became seriously apparent. As we have seen, in the career of Moses Brown alone, his ship in time of peace had been detained in an Irish port at ruinous loss of time and money and he was twice captured by British privateers on the high seas. This is the record of only one seaman. That there were many other such instances is well known. The very fact that such outrages not only had been perpetrated but were likely to become more frequent with each repetition, compelled our merchants to incur the great expense of engaging larger complements and to devote much of their cargo space to the accommodation of heavy ordnance and ammunition.

Not only English but French privateers (and even the cruisers of the piratical States of Barbary) seized our traders—in some instances

detaining entire ship companies in prisons or in slavery many months. In 1794 Edmund Randolph gave a list of thirty-eight American vessels which had been taken and carried into French ports by French cruisers and privateers.

We get a better idea of the humiliating and insecure position in which the United States was placed by the false economy of those who opposed the establishment of a navy, by the following note in an American newspaper:

PORTSMOUTH, N. H., January 20, 1798.—On Thursday morning about sunrise a gun was discharged from the frigate *Crescent* as a signal for getting under way and, at 10 A. M., she cleared the harbor with a fine leading breeze. Our best wishes follow Captain Newman, his officers and men. May they arrive in safety at the place of their destination and present to the Dey of Algiers one of the finest specimens of elegent naval architecture which was ever borne on the Piscataqua's waters.

The *Crescent* is a present from the United States to the Dey of Algiers as a compensation for delay in not fulfilling our treaty stipulations in proper time. Richard O'Brien, Esq., who was ten years a prisoner at Algiers, took passage in the above frigate and is to reside at Algiers as Consul-General of the United States to all the Barbary States.

The *Crescent* has many valuable presents on board

for the Dey and when she sailed was supposed to be worth at least three hundred thousand dollars. Twenty-six barrels of dollars constituted a part of her cargo. It is worthy of remark that the captain, chief of the officers and many of the privates of the *Crescent* frigate have been prisoners at Algiers.

The *Crescent* belonged to that famous group of frigates built from 1794 to 1800, which formed the nucleus of our navy in the war of 1812. They were the 44-gun frigates *United States, Constitution* and *President,* and the 36-gun frigates *Constellation, Congress, Chesapeake, Philadelphia* and *Crescent.*

The nomenclature of these celebrated ships is worthy of note. With the exception of the *Chesapeake,* they were named after the new government; Congress then being in session at Philadelphia so that city was very properly regarded as the capital of the country. It was a "pet" phrase in those days to speak of the United States as a "new constellation" among the nations of the earth, hence the application of the name *Constellation* to a frigate. The *Crescent,* of course, was so named after the

national emblem of Turkey, Algiers being a tributary State. It was the degrading spectacle of this land of liberty paying tribute to the petty States of Barbary that gave rise to that famous exclamation: "Millions for defense; not a penny for tribute!" Depredations on American commerce by French cruisers reached such an extent that on July 7, 1798, all our treaties with that country were abrogated and American cruisers were ordered to capture French vessels when found in the limits and, two days afterward, they were permitted to attack them anywhere.

Steps had already been taken to establish a naval *personnel.* By an act of June 5, 1794, the following well-known men were selected to be captains in the new navy: John Barry, Samuel Nicholson, Silas Talbot, Joshua Barney, Richard Dale and Thomas Truxtun. On December 24, 1798, according to a report of the Secretary of the Navy, the United States navy consisted of two 44-gun and one 36-gun frigates, four 24-gun ships, seven 20- or 18-gun

ships, seven 14- and 12-gun brigs or schooners and one 10-gun sloop.

The following table will be found convenient for reference in narrative of Captain Brown's cruises in this war.

THE UNITED STATES NAVY IN 1798.

RATE.	NAME.	COMMANDER.
44-gun	*United States*	Captain John Barry.
44-gun	*Constitution*	Captain Silas Talbot.
36-gun	*Constellation*	Captain Thomas Truxtun.
24-gun	*Ganges*	Captain Thomas Tingey.
24-gun	*George Washington*	Captain Patrick Fletcher.
24-gun	*Merrimac*	Captain Moses Brown.
24-gun	*Portsmouth*	Captain Daniel McNiell.
20-gun	*Baltimore*	Captain Isaac Phillips.
20-gun	*Delaware*	Captain Stephen Decatur, Sr.
20-gun	*Montezuma*	Captain Alexander Murray.
18-gun	*Herald*	Captain James Sever.
18-gun	*Norfolk*	Captain Thomas Williams.
18-gun	*Pinckney*	Captain Samuel Heywood.
18-gun	*Richmond*	Captain Samuel Barron.

Besides these regular vessels of the navy there were eight revenue cutters, mounting from ten to fourteen guns. They did very effective service. Their names were: *Diligence, Eagle,*

General Greene, Governor Jay, Pickering, Scammell, South Carolina and *Virginia.*

With the exception of the three frigates and revenue cutters, nearly all of these vessels were merchantmen hastily fitted out for the emergency. To officer and man them the Government called on those men who handled our infant maritime forces with such masterful skill and unprecedented audacity in our struggle for independence. All of these men are well known in naval history, most of them afterward attaining high distinction in the service.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST "MERRIMAC"

THE name "Merrimac" is one that will always be famous in American naval history. When that bulky collier *Merrimac* was carried into the jaws of Santiago harbor by the gallant Hobson, new luster was added to the glory of our navy. When, on that Saturday morning, March 8, 1862, the iron-mailed leviathan *Merrimac* began her awful work in Hampton Roads, the name sent unspeakable terror throughout the North and corresponding joy throughout the Confederacy. It was the blackest night to the one; the brightest day to the other. Then, on the following day, took place that terrific struggle between those hideous, newly created monsters, the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac;* the result of which

sounded the death knell of wooden war-ships the world over.

In all, there have been three *Merrimacs* in the United States navy. Of the two just mentioned nothing further need be said. Their fame is world-wide. But of the first *Merrimac* little is known, although her career was highly creditable to the service while the story of her construction and entry into the navy is so singular as to be deserving of special notice.

As we have already noted, in the last chapter, depredations on our commerce by English, French and Barbary cruisers continued long after the nominal cessation of hostilities between the colonies and England and, finally, became so serious that Congress was compelled to create a new navy.

The seaports of New England seem to have been the principal sufferers in these outrages and they were the first to take steps looking toward relief. Our Government, at this time, was sadly embarrassed for want of money and was in the generally chaotic state of every or-

ganization in its initial stage. At Salem the leading men met in the court-house, October, 1798, and passed resolutions with the result that the famous 32-gun frigate *Essex* was built at the expense of a few citizens and presented to the Government. But some months before this patriotic move on the part of the Salemites, the merchants of Newburyport had preconceived a similar idea. In the columns of a local newspaper, under the caption "Patriotic Letter," dated June 1, 1798, we have an interesting account of how the first *Merrimac* came into existence. The letter was addressed to the Hon. Bailey Bartlett, of Haverhill, who represented the Salem district in Congress:

Sir: A number of the inhabitants of this town have agreed to build and equip a ship of three hundred and fifty-five tons to be mounted with twenty 6-pounder cannon and to offer her to the Government of the United States for its use. They have also voted that they will not accept of any other or further compensation from the Government than an interest of six per cent. on the net cost of the ship and equipment and a final reimbursement at the convenience of the Government of the said net cost; and they have appointed us a committee to

inform you of their intention and to request you to promote a provision whereby they may be enabled to carry their designs into execution by the countenance of Government, so far as the same shall appear necessary.

As we indulge in a hope that this intention of the citizens of Newburyport will lead to proportionate exertion in larger and wealthier towns, we beg leave to suggest the convenience that any provision which may be thought proper and applicable to this case might be made general. The inhabitants of the town at the present moment are animated with the most zealous purpose to support and defend with their lives and property the Government of their country, as well against the open attacks of foreign enemies as the insidious attempts of domestic traitors. They heartily wish their abilities extended beyond the present offer, but the immense ravages which have been committed on their property by sea, and the present of the remnant yet at risk, forbids the further indulgence of their inclinations. It may be that with an act of Government, authorizing the Executive to purchase ships of war, the proposal may be closed without legislative aid. If such should be your opinion, we wish you to lay the plan before the Executive, and we shall be the more gratified in this way, as the whole business may probably be thus considerably expedited.

The materials are already in forwardness, and provisional contracts will be entered into, so that probably in ninety days from our receiving assurance that Government patronizes our design, the ship may be afloat. The best calculations we have been able to make of the whole expense reduces it below thirty thousand dollars,

SLOOP OF WAR MERRIMACK, 28 GUNS, CAPTAIN MOSES BROWN, U. S. N., COMMANDING, 1798.

and if the utmost attention to economy and despatch can affect anything, the cost will fall considerably within that sum.

Among the good effects of the present proposal, we have contemplated that in this way Government may, at this period, when so many calls for money exists, procure the means of defense without actual advances; perhaps with more promptitude and undoubtedly with considerably less expense than in the common contract mode of contracts.

With wishes for your health and happiness, we are, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servants,

William Bartlett,
William Coombs,
Dudley A. Tyng,
Moses Brown,
William P. Johnson,
Nicholas Johnson,
Ebenezer Stocker,
Samuel A. Otis, Jr.

Hon. Bailey Bartlett.

This handsome offer was promptly accepted, and without loss of time work was begun. Within seventy-five working days from the time the keel was laid, the vessel was launched, on October 12th. William Hackett superintended

the construction, while William Cross and Thomas M. Clark were the contractors.

Hackett at that time was one of the best shipbuilders in the world. When he undertook the *Merrimac* his reputation had become well established—extending beyond the seas. It was he who built the superb *Alliance* which took part in the famous *Bonhomme Richard-Serapis* fight, September 23, 1799. At the time, there was not a finer war-ship of her class afloat. When the Government ordered the *Alliance*, other shipwrights hesitated to undertake her construction, for the fate of the Revolution was then trembling in the balance, and it was far from a certainty that the work would ever be paid for. William Hackett undertook the contract, and turned out one of the most successful vessels in our first navy. The spot where the *Alliance* was built is marked by a bronze tablet given by the Town Improvement Society of Newburyport.

Hackett had also built the highly successful privateers *Intrepid* (which we have already

noted as having once been under the command of Captain Brown) and *Tyrannicide.* Besides contriving two fire-rafts for the defense of Salisbury against a possible attack by British naval forces, Hackett, in 1787, built, at Quincy, Mass., the largest merchant ship that had ever been launched in the United States down to that period. " She created quite a sensation at the time; people of every rank came to see and admire her. On her arrival at Batavia and Canton the commanders of English and Dutch vessels came on board and acknowledged her to be the handsomest vessel in the two ports."

It was Hackett who built the famous frigate *Essex,* which, after her capture by the British squadron at Valparaiso in 1814, was taken to England, and was used as a model by their shipwrights. Hackett also had the unique distinction of owning what was probably the nearest approach to an automobile in the eighteenth century. It is recorded that in 1762 he bought for his wife Nanna (daughter of Captain William Osgood) a " Top Shase for

which he paid one hundred pounds. This was probably the first chaise owned in Salisbury. He had his initials 'W. H.' painted on the back." This chaise was the subject of vivacious discussion in the local sewing circles for three consecutive winters.

It is difficult, in these days of a cosmopolitan population, to appreciate the intense patriotism that animated our people in the early stages of our national history. We get some inkling of it in the few extracts from a local newspaper printed at the time, relative to the construction of the *Merrimac*. The paper bears date of July 6, 1798, and the following extract refers to the preceding Fourth of July celebration: "The twenty-third anniversary of our independence was celebrated in this town [Newburyport] with greater spirit and unanimity than ever before. The day was ushered in with martial music, the discharge of artillery and the ringing of bells. All the shipping in the harbor and many of the buildings of the town were decorated with American flags. A public

dinner was provided at the hall on Deer Island, of which a large number of gentlemen partook.

"In the afternoon a large number of our young men (which was the most animating feature of the day) were formed on State Street with a respectable band of music at their head under the leadership of Mr. S. Holyoke. Captain Moses Brown accidentally appearing as the young men were forming, was saluted with three cheers and unanimously requested to lead the procession, to which he obligingly consented.

"They first moved down the street to the Federal Street shipyard, where a large number of men were at work on the 20-gun ship [*Merrimac*] now building for the use of the Government, when Captain Brown addressed them in the following words: 'Gentlemen: This being the anniversary of the independence and sovereignty of our nation, which our predecessors gained with their lives and their fortunes, I trust their sons will ever defend them with theirs; and you, gentlemen, being employed in

the laudable business of building a ship for this purpose, the gentlemen forming the procession have thought fit to make this our first stand and give you the salutation of three cheers.'

"The procession then moved through the principal streets of the town, and as they passed the houses of those who patriotically set on foot the subscription for the ship, they repeated the salutation of grateful cheers. Every countenance seemed animated by that virtuous ardor which in men who feel themselves free, and are determined to support the independence of their country at the hazard of their all, appears with grandeur and effect inconceivable to those who have not seen it."

Referring to the appointment of Captain Brown to the command of this vessel, the Newburyport *Herald* of September 11, 1798, says: "No appointment in our growing navy has given more genuine satisfaction than that of Captain Moses Brown to the command of the fine 20-gun ship now building in this town. The work progresses rapidly and the best

judges pronounce it to be as well done as that of any ship ever built in so short a time. She will undoubtedly be launched by the 10th of next month, as she is planked up and the gun deck laid."

The day of launching was, of course, long remembered in Newburyport. The enterprising *Herald*, under date of October 12th, said: "This day at fifteen minutes past one [o'clock] our beautiful, patriotic ship majestically descended from her native land to the embrace of the watery god without the least accident. She is called the *Merrimack*, and will mount twenty 9- and eight 6-pounders. She is finely coppered, and the best judges say she will not suffer by comparison with the finest vessels of her size ever built. Captain William Hackett, the constructor, and Major Cross, the contractor, are entitled to all the merit which can be attached to the profession.

"Her [figure] head is a group composed of an eagle supported on one side by a figure representing Commerce and on the other by a

beautiful female, strikingly emblematic of Justice, and in front are borne the arms of the United States. The design is excellent and does honor to the artist, Mr. Dearing, of Portsmouth. A vast concourse of people attended, to be witnesses of the interesting scene. A Federal salute from the artillery pieces announced to distant friends the happy issue of the launch. The keel of the ship was laid on the 9th of July, since which there have been seventy-four working days, and we have presumed to say that from the spirit which has attended the business, she will be ready for sea in fourteen days, as numbers of the hardy sons of Neptune stand ready to enlist under her worthy commander, and who have long been waiting for an opportunity to manifest their zeal and ability in defense of their injured country and seafaring brethren."

Samuel Swett, who was an eye-witness of the launching, recorded, in 1846, that the *Merrimac* rode "on the tide swan-like, buoyant and beautiful; her tall masts soaring aloft to meet the

lightest zephyr"—this, of course, must have been some days after the launching, when the masts had been stepped.

Although the committee, which had presented the proposal of building the *Merrimac* to their Congressman, had promised a ship of only three hundred and fifty-five tons, on launching the cruiser was found to be of four hundred and sixty-seven tons. Instead of only twenty 6-pounders she was mounted with twenty 9-pounders and eight 6-pounders—a very heavy armament for a ship of her class in those days. She was rated at the Navy Department as a "24-gun sloop-of-war," the ratings usually being below the actual number of guns carried.

A contemporary writer said of her: "The *Merrimac* was the first and best vessel of her size furnished on loan to the Government and was built at a much less expense than any other built for the Government. The inhabitants of the river towns and vicinity seemed in danger of falling in love with their ship, as the sculptor did with his statue, and when we consider that all of

her officers were citizens of Newburyport, and that her commander was as great a favorite as his ship, the deep and inexpressible interest this single ship inspired can hardly be imagined."

Her officers were: Moses Brown, commander; Michael Titcomb and Samuel Chase, first and second lieutenant; Jonathan Titcomb, sailing master; Joseph Brown, Nathan Fletcher, Benjamin Whitmore, midshipmen; Nathaniel Bradstreet, surgeon. That the claim that the *Merrimac* was built "at a much less expense than any other [24-gun sloop-of-war of that year] for the Government" is well substantiated, is shown in the following table:

24-gun sloop-of-war *Connecticut*	$57,260
24-gun sloop-of-war *Ganges*	80,665
24-gun sloop-of-war *George Washington*	69,025
24-gun sloop-of-war *Portsmouth*	59,560
24-gun sloop-of-war *Merrimac*	46,170

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE SCENE OF HOSTILITIES

ALTHOUGH the *Merrimac* had been launched October 12, 1798, so rapidly was the work of equipment pushed that she was ready to sail on a cruise January 1st of the following year. By that time our naval war against France had been under way nearly six months. Many captures of French armed craft had been made, with the result that a larger number of American vessels had ventured to sea.

Early in the year 1799 the Government put into operation a comprehensive plan for the protection of our commerce and the extermination of French privateers, which had been so successfully plying their trade in the West Indies. The entire naval force of the infant republic was massed in these waters and, headed by the

massive frigates *Constitution, United States* and *Constellation,* a brave showing they made.

One squadron under the immediate command of Captain John Barry, in the *United States,* had its rendezvous at Prince Rupert's Bay, with orders to cruise windward of St. Kitts, and as far south as Barbadoes and Tobago. It consisted of the flagship *United States;* the *Constitution,* Captain Samuel Nicholson; the *George Washington,* Captain Patrick Fletcher (whom we remember as having once served under Captain Moses Brown); the *Merrimac,* Captain Moses Brown; the *Portsmouth,* Captain Daniel McNiell; the *Pickering,* Master-Commandant Edward Preble; the *Eagle,* Lieutenant Hugh George Campbell; the *Herald,* Lieutenant Charles C. Russell; the *Scammell,* Lieutenant J. Adams; and the *Diligence,* Lieutenant John Brown.

A second squadron under Captain Truxtun in the *Constellation,* was directed to cruise in the vicinity of Porto Rico, St. Martin and Virgin Gorda. It consisted of the flagship

SCENE OF MOSES BROWN'S ADVENTURES IN THE WEST INDIES
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CUBA
SANTO DOMINGO
PORTO RICO
SANTA CRUZ
ST. THOMAS
VIRGIN GORDA
TORTOLA
ST. MARTIN
ST. BARTHOLOMEW
ST. EUSTATIUS
ST. KITT
NEVIS
ANTIGUA
SABA
LEEWARD ISLANDS
MONTSERRAT
BASSE TERRE
THE SAINTS
PRINCE RUPERT'S BAY
ROSEAU
GUADELOUPE
DE SIRADE
POINTE A PITRE
MARIE GALANTE
DOMINICA
ST. PIERRE
MARTINIQUE
ST. LUCIA
ST. VINCENT
CARIBBEAN SEA
WINDWARD ISLANDS
BARBADOES
GRENADA
TOBAGO
CURACAO
SOUTH AMERICA
PARAMARIBO
SURINAM

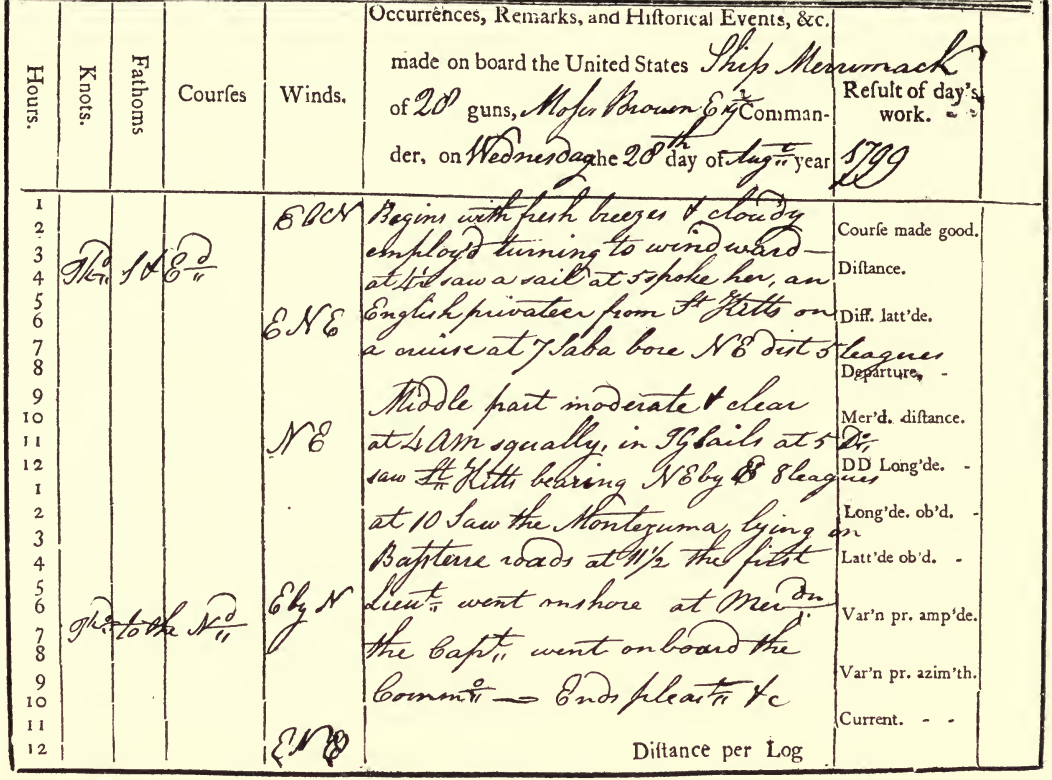
Constellation, the *Baltimore,* Captain Isaac Phillips; the *Norfolk,* Captain Thomas Williams; the *Richmond,* Captain Samuel Barron; and the *Virginia,* Captain Francis Bright. How thoroughly these two squadrons scoured the sea in this part of the West Indies is engagingly set forth in the original log of the *Merrimac,* which was kept by Midshipman Joseph Brown (a son of Captain Brown) of that ship.

The logbook itself is one of singular beauty, a reduced facsimile of the title-page and of one other page being given in this work. Evidently the book was printed especially for the *Merrimac.* Each one of the one hundred and seventy pages is elaborately ornamented, and, though somewhat stained with over one hundred years of existence, the paper is still in good condition, the print remarkably clear, while the daily entries (though somewhat faded) are made in ink and are legible to the last letter. The entire work is an excellent model of faithful and intelligent sea-recording.

Journal of a Cruise

made on board the United States Ship Merrimack of 20 guns, Moses Brown Esq^r Commander, on Tuesday the 27th day of August year 1799

Hours.	Knots.	Fathoms.	Courses	Winds.	Occurrences, Remarks, and Historical Events, &c.	Result of day's work.
1	-	-	North	East	Begins with moderate breezes & cloudy weather	
2					all sail set in chase - fyrd two guns at 2 pm came up	Course made good.
3	Pacht to	South 18	E N E		with & boarded the Schr Tickler from	Distance. Antigua
4	-	-	-	-	bound to Tortola John Showdy Master	
5	-	-	18	-		
6	-	-				
7	-	-	18 by E	-	Ste Croix bearing S W by S 4 leagues	Diff. latt'de. -
8	-	-	E S E		in Tg Sails at 8 recd the Sails	D eparture. - -
9						
10	-	-	18 by E	-		Mer'd. distance.
11						
12					Middle part fresh Breezes & cloudy Squally W^rd	DD Long'de.
1	-	-	S E	-	at 6 AM saw a Ship to windd at 8 out recd sail	
2					Tg Sails & Mr Saba bore	Long'de ob'd. -
3						
4					S E by E 6 leagues	Latt'de ob'd. -
5	-	-	16 by E	-		
6						Var'n pr. amp'de
7	Pacht to		N by E	-	Ends with fresh breezes & flying cloud	
8	the N'd					Var'n pr. azim'th.
9						
10					the Ganges to Windd	Current. -
11						
12	-	-	-	E by N		Distance per Log.



Hours.	Knots.	Fathoms	Courſes	Winds.	Occurrences, Remarks, and Hiſtorical Events, &c. made on board the United States Ship Merrimack of 20 guns, Moſes Brown Esq. Commander, on Wednesday the 28th day of Augt. year 1799	Reſult of day's work.
1				E b N	Begins with freſh breezes & cloudy	Courſe made good.
2					employd turning to windward —	
3					at 1/2 saw a sail at 5 spoke her, an	Diſtance.
4	W.N.W.	18	E d			
5					English privateer from St Kitts on	Diff. latt'de.
6				E N E	a cruise at 7 Saba bore N E dist 5	
7						leagues
8						Departure. -
9					Middle part moderate & clear	
10						Mer'd. diſtance.
11				N E	at 4 AM squally, in 4 Sails at 5	Dr.
12					saw Ft Kitts bearing N E by E 8 leagues	DD Long'de. -
1						
2					at 10 Saw the Montezuma, lying in	Long'de. ob'd. -
3					Basseterre roads at 11 1/2 the first	
4						Latt'de ob'd. -
5				E b N	Lieut. went on shore at Meridn	
6						Var'n pr. amp'de.
7	W.S.W.	to the	N d		the Capt. went on board the	
8						Var'n pr. azim'th.
9					Comm. — Ends pleas. &c	
10						
11						Current. - -
12				E N E	Diſtance per Log	

Fac-simile of a typical page in the Merrimack's log, reduced from 8 x 13 inches. Each one of the 170 pages of the log has the same elaborate designs.

SAILING FROM BOSTON

As many overlooked items of historical and popular interest are brought to light in this log, a digest of it will be here given. Under date of January 3, 1799, young Brown records: "At 1 P. M. weighed our anchors and made sail [from Boston] in company with two ships. At 2 P. M. discharged our pilot. At 4 P. M. Boston Lighthouse distant about twelve miles, from which I take my departure."

The "point of departure" was an important feature in the navigation of those days. It formed the base on which mariners reckoned their position from the time land was lost sight of till they again sighted *terra firma*, at the other end of the voyage.

It was a dull winter's afternoon when the *Merrimac* left Boston, on this, her maiden venture. Though the breeze was moderate, the weather was cloudy, accompanied by snow squalls and, as night fell over the sea, it came on to a steady snow, leaving the ship enshrouded in a pall of darkness, which only those who have been at sea during a snowstorm at night

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can understand. It certainly was not a situation calculated to enliven the spirits of the crew. At best, the first night in a ship after leaving port is one in which there is much confusion. It requires time, even in old ships' companies, to "shake down" again to sea routine.

In the *Merrimac's* case the situation was especially trying. The ship was new in hull, rigging and armament; the crew was newly enlisted—doubtless many green hands prostrated by seasickness; the officers had not associated together in ship duty, and had not had time in which to inspire that confidence in each other so necessary to the perfect handling of a ship's company. Furthermore, the mission on which the ship was going was a new one—new, at least, to most of her people.

Under such conditions we can easily imagine that, as the *Merrimac* blindly plowed her way over the turbulent sea that blackest of black nights—dismally creaking and groaning in her timbers and new rig—her officers anxiously watched each rope, the set of every sail, the

sway of every spar, the slack of every shroud. Possibly, in the general confusion of leaving port the deck-lanterns had been misplaced. Or, if lighted, their feeble rays only served to render the surrounding gloom deeper and the inboard shadows blacker. The forms of many men, prostrated by sickness, lying about the decks, the disordered arrangement of the ropes, cannon, baggage, provisions; the encumberment of sails, buckets, small arms; the decks slippery with snow and a howling gale shrieking through the rigging, all conspired to create a scene of anxiety and horror.

All through that black night the sloop-of-war rushed over the dark, snow-enshrouded billows, each lunging roll, each rising header carrying her nearer to her goal. Had she collided with another craft that night we could readily understand how easy it is to "leave port and never be heard from again."

By dawn of day the *Merrimac* was one hundred miles from Boston. Although it was still snowing and there was a "large sea on," Cap-

tain Brown had "all sail set," and reduced only when night came on. A weakness was discovered in the topgallant yard. It was promptly sent down, corrected and replaced the next day, so that on January 5th the ship made the truly creditable run of over two hundred miles, or a total of nearly four hundred from Boston in fifty hours.

On the fifth day the *Merrimac* had come within the influence of the Gulf Stream and experienced one of the peculiar dangers to navigation of that day. She had left Boston in the dead of a New England winter, when the mercury was having a chilly flirtation with the zero point, and in five days found herself in the semi-tropical latitude of Bermuda. Nearly all of her rigging was of hemp rope and, although it had been taut in Boston, the warm influence of the Gulf Stream caused it to slacken, so as to give her spars little or no support. Should she be overtaken by a heavy gale while in that condition there was great danger of rolling her masts out; even in a

moderate sea. It was to guard against such a catastrophe that Captain Brown, on January 7th, "employed all hands setting up the rigging." Nowadays, this danger is largely avoided by having all standing rigging made of iron or steel.

Scarcely had this task been accomplished when the first sail since leaving port was discovered. It was to windward, and Captain Brown at once began beating up to her. The stranger, evidently, was anxious to avoid a meeting and made sail to escape. The chase lasted all day. Before evening it came on a "heavy gale and rain," so that the chase was lost to view, but throughout that night the war-ship thrashed to windward in blind pursuit; hoping to obtain another view of the stranger at daybreak.

About at midnight the wind suddenly shifted in the *Merrimac's* favor, and in a short time she was "scudding before a heavy gale, goose-winged," that is, with studding sails set on each side. Much to the disappointment of all,

when day returned, no trace of the stranger was seen, but the *Merrimac* persisted in the chase. By noon the weather moderated, but it was still cloudy, so that it was impossible to see very far. At half-past eight o'clock that night, just after a rain squall had passed over, the weather lifted, and the stranger was discovered. Captain Brown immediately altered his course and, by putting on a heavy pressure of sail, managed to keep her in sight throughout the night, and on the following morning—the American crew all the time being at quarters—came within gunshot. Not wishing to injure a possible friend Captain Brown refrained from firing, and by 3 P. M., ran alongside and boarded. The chase proved to be the English merchant ship *Carterett*, John Treludden, master, bound for Falmouth. The *Carterett* had mistaken the *Merrimac* for a French war-ship.

Although disappointed at not meeting an enemy, the chase had been an exciting one and had given the green crew that much-to-be-

desired opportunity of drilling under actual war conditions. Resuming her course southward, the *Merrimac*, at nine o'clock on the following morning, January 10th, discovered another sail and, shaking out her reefs, gave chase. At 11.30 A. M. she came up with her and, on boarding, found her to be the brig *Three Friends*, William Blanchard, master, from Thomastown bound for Barbadoes, eleven days out. As she was English property Captain Brown allowed her to proceed.

For the two days following the weather was hazy and fitful, with frequent rain squalls. As the ship had now reached a point some eight hundred miles further south and, consequently was in much warmer weather, it again became necessary to "set up the rigging." This work engaged all hands through the afternoon of the 12th.

From January 13th to the 16th, inclusive, the *Merrimac* enjoyed fairly good weather in her course southward, the ship logging about two hundred miles a day. On the last day men-

tioned, Captain Brown exercised his crew by going "through the maneuvers of a sham action." Realizing that he was now nearing that part of the West Indies where he might, at any moment, expect to meet the enemy, he improved the moderate weather of the next few days by daily exercise of the crew at the great guns, small arms and rapid maneuvering of the ship, as if in action. On the evening of January 18th the island of Dominica was sighted, and at six o'clock on the following morning "we saw the high land of Guadeloupe."

The *Merrimac* was now close to the rendezvous to which she had been ordered, Prince Rupert's Bay, in the island of Dominica, and an extraordinary lookout was maintained not only for French war-ships and merchantmen, but for our own ships, in order to avoid an action with them by mistake on a dark night. We discover this precaution in the frequent entries in the *Merrimac's* log of such data as the following: "At 7 P. M. the Saints bore

northwest. At midnight [January 19-20] the north point of Dominica distant three leagues. At half-past 1 A. M. hove-to. At 2 A. M. saw two sail to leeward. Bore away and made sail for the high land of Dominica. At 9 A. M. hove-to, and the first lieutenant [Michael Titcomb] went ashore to the fort [probably seeking information as to the whereabouts of the American fleet]. At ten o'clock the boat returned. Bore away again. At eleven tacked ship several times."

All these unusual details in the log indicate plainly enough that the *Merrimac* was now on the scene of immediate action and that extra caution was necessary in her maneuvers — especially as it was known that several large French frigates were in the vicinity.

The next entry in the log, that of the following day, reads: "First part [of the day] pleasant weather. At 1 P. M. bore away for two large ships. Ran within one and a half leagues of the same and showed our signals

but they, not answering them, at 2 P. M. hauled our wind and made sail for Dominica. At 5 P. M. came-to in Prince Rupert's Bay, and moored ship, the Captain going on shore. Saw a large ship running down the north side of the island.

"January 21st.—Took on board thirty-seven casks of water and one boat-load of ballast to trim the ship. There arrived from a cruise [in this port] the British frigate *Pearl*, Captain Ballard."

That Captain Brown had reached Prince Rupert's Bay and had found none of our ships at that rendezvous, occasioned some anxiety, for the sloop-of-war *Merrimac* would have had little chance if once she got under the guns of one of the French corvets or frigates that were cruising in these parts. With a view to falling in with some of our ships, and thus learning where the fleet was, Captain Brown determined to make several short runs; having Prince Rupert's Bay for his base.

Accordingly, at seven o'clock on the morning

of January 22d he "unmoored ship; at 9 A. M. got under way; set all sail on the wind. Plying to windward and tacking ship occasionally. At four o'clock in the afternoon saw a sloop. Gave her a gun, brought her to and boarded. She was from Roseau bound for the Saints."

During the next forty-eight hours the *Merrimac* plied to windward and tacked occasionally, waiting to get some news of the squadron. At noon, January 23d, she had worked her way north of Dominica and, standing in too close to the French island of Marie Galante, she received two shots from the fort which, however, did no damage.

By daybreak, January 25th, Captain Brown had so far worked his way to windward as to sight the island of Désirade and at six o'clock in the evening sighted and gave chase to a sail which bore away for the *Merrimac* as if anxious to meet her. Shortly afterward Captain Brown showed his signals which were answered and at eleven o'clock, being within hailing distance,

found the stranger to be the *George Washington.* In a short time Captain Brown was snugly ensconced in the *George Washington's* cabin learning all the news from his old shipmate, Captain Patrick Fletcher.

CHAPTER XIV

CONVOYING A GREAT FLEET

AFTER cruising in the vicinity of Désirade and Marie Galante, in company with the *George Washington*, for two days, the *Merrimac* returned to Prince Rupert's Bay where she found the flagship *United States* and *Constitution* at anchor. Captain Brown now learned that a number of American merchantmen from various points in the West Indies and South America were making for Prince Rupert's Bay, where they were to be formed in a great fleet and escorted home; the *Merrimac* having been selected as the convoying ship.

From January 28th to February 2d the *Merrimac* took in casks of water and stone ballast, preparatory to her long voyage. At four o'clock on the afternoon of February 2d, the *United States* signaled the ships to get under

way and, followed by the *Constitution, Merrimac* and *George Washington,* and the merchantmen, they moved out of the roads in an imposing array. The fleet put into the port of Martinique to await the arrival of other merchantmen; meantime the men-of-war made short cruises.

At eleven o'clock on the morning of February 7th, while the *Merrimac* was thirty-five miles to north of the Désirade, a sail was discovered northward, to which chase was given. As the stranger proved to be a remarkably fast sailer, the chase lasted all the following night and well into the next day. At four o'clock in the afternoon the *Merrimac* fell in with the *Constitution* and was informed that she had spoke the chase, which was a British packet from Antigua to Barbadoes.

Scarcely a day now passed without some exciting incident, which kept the men in the squadron at quarters most of the time. A few extracts from the log will give a better idea of the excitement: "At 2 P. M., February 9th, saw

the *Constitution* on our lee bow, under full sail, in chase of a schooner to windward. We let out our reefs, set all sail and joined in the chase. Night coming on, we lost sight of the ship and gave it up.

"February 11th.—At 4 P. M. saw a craft to the south. Made sail for the same. At 6 P. M., finding that the above sail was standing for us, we hauled our courses and got all ready for action. At seven o'clock she came alongside of us and proved to be a British frigate. A ship in sight to windward, supposed to be the *Constitution.*

"February 14th.—At 11 P. M. saw two strange sail bearing down on the fleet. Hauled up the mainsail and bore away for them. Found them to be armed ships. Showed them signals and was answered by them. At meridian spoke them, the one an English 20-gun ship, the other a transport mounting twelve guns."

At four o'clock on the morning of February 15th, the *Merrimac* gave chase to a sail, which ran into Basse Terre for refuge. Evidently it

was a French privateer, which had hoped to make a prize or two under cover of night.

Getting under way from Martinique, the cumbersome fleet worked its way northward, passing in full view of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and on the morning of the 16th sighted Montserrat. It was here that a stranger was discovered in the midst of the fleet. The *Merrimac* promptly gave her a shot and brought her to. She proved to be a harmless English schooner from Montserrat, but the fact that she had come into the fleet and had remained there undetected until daylight, shows how difficult was the task in which Captain Brown was engaged. It was this danger, and the difficulty of keeping so many vessels of widely varying sailing qualities, together, that led Captain Brown to write: "You may think there is an honor in this business [convoying], but there is more trouble to keep them together. . . . I don't expect much idle bread. I have been but four days at a time in port since my arrival at the rendezvous."

As the great fleet passed the bay of Nevis, the

Merrimac's second lieutenant went ashore in a boat to ascertain if any American merchantmen were there desiring convoy. Finding none, he returned, and the fleet bore away for St. Kitts, coming to anchor in Basseterre before night. Here they found the 36-gun frigate *Constellation* with her prize, the 40-gun French frigate *Insurgent*. On the following day the *Montezuma* arrived at Basseterre with twenty sail of American merchantmen, increasing the fleet to a total of forty-two sail.

At noon, February 18th, the fleet got under way and began the final passage homeward. Sweeping majestically past the Dutch islands of St. Eustatius and Saba, with the *Merrimac* in the lead, the armada was thrown into some confusion by two incidents. At half-past four o'clock in the morning, when it was still dark, a strange sail was discovered. The *Merrimac* promptly gave chase, and fired three shots before she hove-to. She was an English privateer brig of fourteen guns.

In a number of instances English war-ships

had intercepted our merchantmen and, had it not been for the protection afforded by the *Merrimac* in this case, it is probable that the privateer would not have resisted the temptation of "seizing" one or more of the fleet. As it was, she was requested to "move on."

Scarcely had the affair of the privateer been dismissed when, at 7 A. M., a large ship was discovered to leeward, to which the swift-sailing *Merrimac* gave chase. When quite near, the stranger showed English colors. Of course, any French craft could easily have used this flag to escape molestation. To guard against such a trick, the American and English officers had arranged a secret code by which they could distinguish each other. It was this secret signal that Captain Brown now displayed, but finding that the stranger did not answer, the Americans cleared for action and fired several shots. This was answered by the stranger firing several guns, "some to leeward and some to windward."

Determined to remove all doubt, Captain Brown crowded on sail and by ten o'clock came

up with her and, on hailing, learned that she was an English war-ship on a cruise. In response to the sharp inquiry why they had so nearly precipitated a battle between the two men-of-war, the Englishman said that he had not been able to make out the *Merrimac's* signals.

Greatly vexed by the incident, Captain Brown rejoined his fleet and on the following day exercised a little discipline on one of his own convoy, when her master paid no attention to signals. Early in the morning, observing a merchantman disobeying the fleet signals, Captain Brown fired three shots into the offender, and then sent his second lieutenant, Samuel Chase, aboard her to give her master a severe lecture.

About four o'clock on the following morning, the *Merrimac* brought-to and boarded an English lugger of ten guns that was found among the merchantmen that morning after a dark night. It was really singular how many British armed craft managed to make their way into this fleet under cover of night.

After remaining at St. Thomas several days,

the fleet, on February 22d, got under way again, when Midshipman Brown notes: "We fired a salute of seventeen guns which was answered by a number of American vessels [in the convoy] in honor to General Washington, it being his birthday."

The great fleet had now, after several narrow escapes, cleared the dangers of the West Indies and was boldly heading into the Atlantic Ocean for a quick run up the coast of the United States to the various home ports. On the second day out from St. Thomas, the *Merrimac* (always in the lead of the imposing armada, like a general marshaling his forces), chased two strangers, who proved to be Americans bound for St. Thomas.

Having escorted the merchantmen well on their last stretch of the voyage to the United States, the *Merrimac*, on February 28th, signaled: "Make the best of your way home," headed about, and shaped her course so as to make a broad sweep to the eastward of the Lesser Antilles, in the hope of falling in with

some of the enemy's cruisers on her way back to Prince Rupert's Bay. On several occasions Captain Brown's expectations seemed about to be fulfilled.

At two o'clock on the morning following his farewell to his fleet, he discovered two strange sails, one to the northeast and one to the southeast. An hour later he made out the first to be a ship standing for the *Merrimac*. Finding, on exchange of signals, that she was English, Captain Brown, at four o'clock, tacked to the south and overhauled the schooner *Victory*, fourteen days out from Norfolk.

At ten o'clock on the night of March 6th the *Merrimac* discovered and gave chase to a sail directly ahead. In spite of rain squalls and the darkness, Captain Brown managed to keep on the track of the stranger and, at 3 A. M., picked up a small boat which, evidently, had been thrown overboard from the chase. All that day the race continued, the stranger being fore-and-aft-rigged, making a better course of it to windward than the square-rigged *Merrimac*.

By nightfall the chase had greatly increased her lead and, during the night, escaped.

No further sign of a sail was discovered until on the morning of March 10th, when two large ships were descried off the northern end of the island of Désirade, at which point the *Merrimac* had now arrived on her return voyage to the rendezvous. Making signals, Captain Brown soon learned that they were the *Constellation* and the British war-ship *Santa Margarita.* The *Merrimac* now laid a direct course for Prince Rupert's Bay, arriving there on the following day.

CHAPTER XV

CAPTURING FRENCH WAR-SHIPS

AFTER remaining in port two weeks, the *Merrimac*, on March 20th, put to sea in company with the *United States*, *Constitution* and *Eagle* for a cruise. Making their course for Guadeloupe, they took a look into the harbor of St. Pierre, Martinique, where they saw a number of vessels. Becoming separated from her consorts, the *Merrimac* made her way up to Antigua and, on the evening of March 25th, gave chase to a brig which made every effort to escape. The pursuit lasted all night but at half-past five o'clock in the morning the *Merrimac* was sufficiently near to bring the chase to with a shot. She proved to be the *Harmony* of Baltimore, which had been captured by the French privateer, *Résolue*, and had on board a prize-master and eight negroes. Tak-

ing his prisoners on board the *Merrimac*, Captain Brown placed a prize crew in the *Harmony* and escorted her to St. Pierre, where they arrived March 30th.

Remaining in port only long enough to replenish his water casks, Captain Brown put to sea again on April 1st for a general cruise among the islands. A number of sails were spoken and meetings with war-ships were frequent.

At one o'clock on the morning of April 10th a large ship was discovered bearing down on the *Merrimac*. Captain Brown made the necessary night signals but, as they were not answered, he hastily cleared for action. At daylight the stranger proved to be the *Constitution*.

On the following day the *Constitution* spoke a brig from Surinam and learned that the *Portsmouth* was at that port with a fleet of sixty American merchantmen ready to sail for the United States. It was also learned that a number of French privateers were fitting in the

vicinity with a view to attacking the merchantmen whenever opportunity offered.

Two weeks later, while the *Merrimac* was cruising near St. Thomas, a number of sails were descried to leeward and, on running down and exchanging signals, they proved to be the Surinam convoy under the protection of the *Constitution.* The next few days the *Merrimac* was engaged in " drumming up " the rear of the fleet—that is, towing the dull sailers so that the convoy might remain in compact form.

After remaining near the fleet several days, the *Merrimac* shaped her course northward and on May 12th anchored in Nantucket Roads from which place she went to Boston, anchoring in President's Roads May 15th, thus giving the officers and men of the ship an opportunity to see their families and friends. Remaining in this port only a few days, the *Merrimac* again got under way and on June 7th sailed from Boston to return to her station in the West Indies.

At two o'clock on the morning of June 20th, while on her old cruising ground, the *Merrimac*

gave chase to a suspicious sail and, after a hard run, in which she fired twenty-three shots, the cruiser came up with her and, giving a broadside, compelled the stranger to haul down her flag. She proved to be the French national schooner *Magicienne*, of fourteen guns and sixty-three men. The prisoners were taken aboard the *Merrimac* and, placing a prize crew of ten men aboard the *Magicienne*, Captain Brown resumed his cruise, having his prize in company.

At one o'clock on the morning of the following day, while near the island of Désirade, a sail was discovered northward and, standing for her, the *Merrimac* fired three shots and brought her to. Owing to the extreme darkness and violent squalls the Americans were unable to board their prize. Captain Brown ordered the Frenchmen to hoist a light and to remain close by until daylight. During a terrific storm of thunder and lightning *the Merrimac* lost sight of the second vessel but managed to retain the *Magicienne*.

It was on this dark night that Captain

Brown gave proof of those sterling qualities which so distinguished him as a commander. The incident was narrated in 1846 by Dr. Nathaniel Bradstreet who, for many years, was a prominent physician in Newburyport. Dr. Bradstreet, as a young man, entered the navy, his first service being that of surgeon in the *Merrimac* on this cruise. The following is taken from Samuel Swett's sketch of Moses Brown's life, privately published in 1846.

"Dr. Bradstreet relates," says Mr. Swett, "how they were visited by one of those tremendous storms which are known only within the tropics, accompanied by the most terrific thunder and lightning he had ever witnessed. Every man on board was thoroughly appalled at the instant, inevitable destruction which seemed impending over them—excepting their commander who, in the height of the tempest, was walking his quarter deck in total, absolute, unruffled composure.

"Dr. Bradstreet, though a very firm man, observing him was tempted by his anxious ap-

prehension to venture the bounds of formal propriety and put this question to him:

"'Don't you think we are in danger from the storm, sir?'

To which Captain Brown replied, very calmly: "'Why, doctor, it has not hurt us yet.'

"And there was no stage acting here. In the midst of this war of worlds, his impassive intellect framed at once his instant, most logical answer to a very logical man; and even threw in a gleam of his own sportive humor besides for the encouragement of those about him. There is a surpassing interest in all this and a lofty sublimity indeed, that would render all further comment superfluous."

At eight o'clock on the following morning chase was given to a schooner and on bringing her to she was found to be the *Isabella* from Baltimore; the same the *Merrimac* had brought-to the night before. Captain Brown now made for Basseterre Roads, arriving there with his prize June 30th, and landed his prisoners.

CRUISING IN COMPANY

Remaining in port only long enough to refit and take on board provisions, Captain Brown got under way again July 5th for a cruise to the southeast. After speaking the English letter-of-marque *Lucretia* and the American privateer *Polly*, of North Carolina, John Chadwick, master, and meeting a large number of vessels daily, the *Merrimac* made her way to the east side of Guadeloupe and Désirade; where she would be most likely to fall in with outward and homeward bound ships. She frequently met other vessels of our fleet and at times cruised in company with the *Ganges*, *George Washington* and *Norfolk*.

Under date of July 15th Joseph Brown notes: "At 5 A. M. saw a sail. Gave chase but at 8 A. M. lost sight of her. At 10 A. M. saw a sail to the south and gave chase to it. At 11 A. M. saw a Danish schooner to windward. Gave her a gun. The *Norfolk* spoke her. Continued chasing the other sail, which was a small schooner. Fired two shots at her. At noon gave over the chase, the schooner being close inshore."

On July 19th, while the *Merrimac*, *Ganges* and *Norfolk* were scudding before a heavy squall, the *Norfolk* carried away her maintopmast. Captain Brown immediately bore down to his consort and went aboard with proffers of assistance. The injury was a slight one but, fortunately, none of the crew was hurt. As the *Norfolk* would be placed in a precarious position if she met a French war-ship while in this partially crippled condition, the *Merrimac* and *Ganges* accompanied their consort to Prince Rupert's Bay, arriving there on the day following the accident.

The next day, however, the *Merrimac*, having refilled her water casks, put to sea again in company with the *Ganges*. That day they fell in with a great fleet of American and English merchantmen bound for St. Kitts under the protection of the *United States* and other war-ships. By order of Captain Barry, the *Merrimac* and *Ganges* were ordered to escort the merchantmen to their destination. Taking a dull sailing sloop in tow, the *Merrimac* resumed her

convoy duties. Having seen the fleet safely into Basseterre, St. Kitts, the *Merrimac*, at the special request of the American agent at that place, Mr. Clarkson, convoyed a schooner to St. Bartholomew, Mr. Clarkson being a passenger.

While returning from this errand, the *Merrimac* gave chase to a schooner which failed to answer the signals and, after tacking several times, and finding that the schooner was gaining on him, Captain Brown fired two shots to induce her to heave-to. It proved to be the English sloop *Neptune*, William P. Robertson, master.

By the time Captain Brown returned to Basseterre he found there assembled a fleet of one hundred merchantmen awaiting convoy to the United States. As so many ships were too bulky a mass to be conveniently navigated in the comparatively narrow waters of the West Indies, they were divided into squadrons, and escorted one at a time to St. Thomas, and thence homeward.

While lying in Basseterre Roads waiting to take his turn at this work, Captain Barry re-

ceived word that several French privateers were cruising to the southward and he sent the *Merrimac*, post-haste, after them, with the result that one of the most dangerous French letters-of-marque in the West Indies was captured. The details of this affair are given in the *Merrimac's* log as follows:

"Aug. 6th.—At 1 P. M. hove up [anchor] and got under way. Saw a small fleet of Americans running down under the convoy of an English letter-of-marque, from Martinique bound to America. Took them under my own convoy. At 4 P. M. saw the Commodore [Barry] with a prize which he had captured, from Guadeloupe, laden with sugar and coffee. At 5 P. M. went on board with the Commodore [probably in obedience to a signal]. At half-past five o'clock the Captain returned and made sail. Left the fleet to proceed on under convoy of the English [letter-of-marque] brig. [Evidently Captain Barry had received information about French privateers and had dispatched the *Merrimac* after them.] At 11 A. M. spoke

a Danish schooner from Martinique. At 11.30 A. M. boarded an English brig from Halifax bound to Antigua, out twenty-one days. A sail in sight running down.

"Aug. 7th.—Begins with fresh breezes and squally weather. Employed beating to windward. At 1 P. M. boarded the schooner *Neutrality*, from New Haven bound for St. Kitts, out thirty-four days. At 8 A. M. saw a sail. Bore away and gave chase. Fired three shots and at nine o'clock brought her to. She proved to be the French letter-of-marque *Bonaparte*, of eight guns and thirty-four men. Took the prisoners on board, and manned her with a prize crew. The island of Nevis bearing southwest, one-half south, distant four leagues."

Although one of the smallest privateers in the West Indies, the *Bonaparte* had contrived to do more injury to American commerce than any other French armed vessel. The *Merrimac* returned to Basseterre with her prize.

CHAPTER XVI

VERY ACTIVE CRUISING

THAT Captain Brown did not earn "idle bread" while in the service of the Government is fully shown by the log of the *Merrimac*. As we have seen in the last chapter, he entered the port of Basseterre with his prize, the *Bonaparte*, on the night of July 7th. Leaving a midshipman and two men in charge of the privateer, he sailed again early in the morning of the 9th, and resumed his search of the enemy.

On the evening of the next day, while in company with the *Pickering*, he gave chase to a strange sail. Managing to keep in sight of the stranger all that night the *Merrimac*, on the following morning, came up with it and found her to be a French cartel—"with a cargo of prisoners on board"—from Guadeloupe

bound to Charleston, S. C. Most of the captives were American sailors who had been taken in trading vessels by French men-of-war and privateers and had been confined in the dungeons of Guadeloupe. Many of them had been brutally treated and, packed in the narrow confines of the cartel, presented a pitiable appearance.

To break the monotony of the cruise, the officers of our different war-ships frequently dined with one another while sailing in company. It was while Master-Commandant Edward Preble, of the *Pickering*, was dining with Captain Brown aboard the *Merrimac*, August 12th, that word was sent down to the Captain's cabin that a strange sail had been sighted. Young Joseph Brown does not say what the sturdy sea fighters had for dinner but that is immaterial to this narrative, for Preble immediately rushed up on deck, threw himself into his gig and urged his oarsmen, at a thirty-two-a-minute stroke, to hasten back to the *Pickering*, while Captain Brown was setting all sail—chuckling with glee

to find that he had got a five-minutes' start of the *Pickering*.

All this haste was futile, and the good dinner was wasted, however, for the stranger proved to be the good United States ship *Ganges*, Captain Thomas Tingey. Determined to have a fine feast, anyway, Captain Brown went aboard the *Ganges* "at 8 P. M. and returned at half-past nine o'clock" [so the log reads]—ample time for a man with a forty-eight-inch waist to enjoy the good things of life.

The three vessels, *Merrimac*, *Ganges* and *Pickering*, now cruised in company for several days. On the 14th the *Merrimac* chased a stranger into a port in Guadeloupe. Captain Brown persisted so long in the effort that he got under the guns of the fort and had to haul aboard his tacks so sharply that the good ship was taken by surprise—or at least got her head into the wind and was taken "aback." As there was a stiff breeze at the time it was really a critical moment for the ship—as she began to gather stern-board. With good management,

however, the sloop-of-war was put about and "showed a clean pair of heels" to the fort.

On the evening of the 15th of August the squadron gave chase to a stranger. All night long the ships crowded on every stitch of canvas that would draw but the *Ganges*, having the advantage in position, had the honor of running down the game on the following morning. It proved to be an American schooner that had been captured by a French privateer and was now making for Guadeloupe with a French prize crew aboard.

From the American prisoners on board it was learned that the privateer was near by and, shaping their course in the direction given, the Americans soon descried her sails and made all haste in pursuit. The vessels were now in sight of Guadeloupe and the chase—after receiving four shots from the cruiser—managed to make the port in safety.

Under dates of August 17th Joseph Brown notes: "At three o'clock in the afternoon, hove-to off Basseterre, St. Kitts. At 5 P. M. lost a

man overboard by the name of Martin Maden." Getting under way again the next day, the *Merrimac* fell in with a fleet of nine American and one English merchantmen and convoyed them to St. Thomas. After cruising several weeks to the windward of the Lesser Antilles, in company with several other American war-ships, the *Merrimac*, on September 6th, put into Prince Rupert's Bay for water.

As illustrating the ceaseless activity of this service, it will be noted that on the second day in port, while engaged in filling up her water-casks, a squadron of seven sail appeared passing the entrance of the harbor making northward. In obedience to signals from Captain Barry the *Merrimac* was at once put under sail, ran out to investigate and, on ascertaining that the strangers were not French, returned to her moorings.

On the 10th of September the *Merrimac* again got to sea, in company with the *Ganges*, for a cruise northward. After beating for a week against a strong head wind and a lee cur-

rent, the *Merrimac*, while off Désirade, gave chase to two large sails. Much to the disappointment of all, they proved to be the English sloop-of-war *Bittern* with her prize, a French privateer recently captured.

Working her way northward, the *Merrimac* put into Basseterre, St. Kitts, for provisions and, on the evening of the 24th of September, while cruising in sight of Porto Rico, gave chase to a strange sail. The pursuit lasted all night, and on the following morning Captain Brown came up with and boarded the English schooner *Charming Nancy*, which had recently been captured by a French privateer and was in the possession of a French prize crew. The *Charming Nancy* was bound for New York. Captain Brown took the Frenchmen aboard the *Merrimac* and, placing a midshipman and five men aboard the schooner, ordered them to make the best of their way to that port.

Scarcely had the Americans completed the change when another sail hove in sight and, giving chase, the *Merrimac*, at 7 P. M., over-

hauled the American sloop *Elizabeth*, from New York bound for Curaçao which, also, had been captured by the French and was in the hands of a prize crew. Transferring the prisoners to the *Merrimac*, Captain Brown worked his way along the southern side of Porto Rico and on the afternoon of September 28th made sail after a stranger which led him a hard chase all that night. Early on the following morning he came up with it. It proved to be a French schooner with a number of passengers aboard from Jacquemel, bound for St. Domingo. As the ship was not armed, Captain Brown, after placing on board three of his prisoners, allowed the schooner to proceed. A few hours afterward chase was given to another sail but, after getting within gunshot and firing a few shots, the *Merrimac* lost her in the night.

While cruising to the south of Porto Rico the *Merrimac*, on the 30th of September and the 1st of October, boarded two Spanish vessels and two English privateers but did not molest them. While near the Grand Cayman, on the

5th of October, two boats put off from the shore and, thinking that they might have information of value to him, Captain Brown hove-to. On coming alongside they proved to be "bumboats," manned by negroes anxious to sell fresh provisions. Captain Brown purchased some turtles from them and resumed his cruise.

Making his way into the Gulf of Mexico and signaling vessels almost every day, Captain Brown, on the 20th of October, anchored in the harbor of Vera Cruz, where he filled his water casks and replenished his stock of provisions. Three days later the ship was ready for sea, waiting only for a favorable wind. The wind, however, blew steadily from the wrong direction for forty-eight hours, compelling the *Merrimac* to remain in port.

At one time the gale was so heavy that the cruiser dragged her anchors and was compelled to run a hawser to a Spanish frigate and hang on to her. Finally, on the afternoon of the 25th, the wind served and, firing a salute

of thirteen guns, which was answered by the Spanish frigate, the *Merrimac* put to sea.

Shaping his course back to his old cruising ground, Captain Brown, on the evening of November 18th, gave chase to a suspicious sail which appeared to the west. As the stranger seemed anxious to avoid a meeting, Captain Brown crowded on all sail, notwithstanding the fact that a terrific gale was blowing at the time. All that night the *Merrimac* staggered and groaned under a fearful pressure of canvas—the chase also bordering on the danger point in sail-carrying in her evident eagerness to escape. It was not until five o'clock the next morning that the *Merrimac* finally reached the chase and, even then, it was not until the Americans had fired three shots that the stranger was induced to heave-to. Much to the chagrin of all, she proved to be a Spanish sloop out of Havana. As it was blowing a heavy gale, with a boisterous sea, Captain Brown did not board and permitted her to proceed. The Spaniards

had mistaken the *Merrimac* for an English warship.

On the 21st of November the *Merrimac* put into Havana for water and provisions, where she found the *Norfolk*. Captain Brown had now received his homeward-bound orders and, taking on board eleven French prisoners from the *Norfolk* he left Havana on the 25th of November and shaped his course northward.

When four days out a dangerous leak was discovered in the forehold. The weather, at the time, was stormy and heavy seas made it exceedingly difficult to get at the place. It seems that the *Merrimac* had a quantity of coal aboard for ballast and it got in the pumps in such a way as to prevent them from working.

All hands that could be spared from navigating the ship, were at once put to work getting the coal out of the hold. The task was not completed until the next morning, when the carpenter found that the leak could not be reached until the ship made port. A passage was cleared for the water, however, and by working one

pump all the time the leakage was kept down.

From this time on the *Merrimac* encountered a series of gales and, on the 1st of December, Captain Brown placed his quarter-deck guns in the hold in order to steady his ship. The *Merrimac* put into Cape Ann Roads December 8th and anchored, after an absence from home of six months, nearly all of that time having been spent on the open sea. Young Joseph Brown now resigned from his position as midshipman and left the navy for mercantile pursuits.

CHAPTER XVII

CLOSING SCENES

THE year 1800 opened auspiciously for American arms in the West Indies. Early in February, the 36-gun frigate *Constellation* again had the envied opportunity of meeting a worthy foe—her antagonist this time being the 40-gun French frigate *Vengeance*. Our navy was materially increased and a larger force was detailed for patrol and convoy duty in the West Indies.

As might be expected, such a powerful and successful cruiser as the *Merrimac* was not permitted to remain long in port and, early in 1800, Captain Brown again found himself on his way to the scene of hostilities. In the course of the naval campaign of this year the *Merrimac* captured two French privateers, the *Brillanté*, of sixteen guns, and the *Phénix*, of

fourteen guns and one hundred and twenty-eight men—besides rendering valuable services in the line of convoying merchantmen and recapturing American traders which had fallen into the enemy's hands.

At one time Captain Brown was intrusted with the command of a small squadron, consisting of the *Merrimac* and the 20-gun sloop-of-war *Patapsco,* Captain Henry Geddes, to disperse a fleet of French armed craft, mostly letters-of-marque and picaroons, which had sailed from Guadeloupe and had made a descent on the island of Curaçao. This place had been captured from the Dutch by the English only two years before and so became a legitimate object of attack for Frenchmen. Had they confined their acts of violence to Englishmen, there would have been no ground for American intervention but our interests had been infringed upon and so this squadron, with Captain Brown as its "commodore," was sent out.

Midshipman Benjamin Whitmore, who was in

the *Merrimac* on that expedition, says in a private letter, written in 1846: "They (the banditti) took Outer Banda, or the west side of the river, and plundered the inhabitants of nearly everything. Our ship [the *Merrimac*], with the *Patapsco*, was ordered there, and on our appearance at the island they all cut and ran. But before they could reach Guadeloupe, whence they sailed, we captured the *Brillianté*. Other of our cruisers captured two or three more of the picaroons."

After this blow, French privateering in the West Indies steadily declined so that many of our cruisers were ordered home. A treaty of peace with France, which had been in course of negotiation some time, was ratified by the Senate February 3, 1801, and all our cruisers were recalled.

It has been noted in a previous chapter that when Congress tried the costly experiment of "running a government" without a naval force sufficiently large to protect its commerce and interests abroad, our merchants suffered losses

which, in the aggregate, amounted to many times the sum saved by not maintaining a naval force commensurate with the growth of the country.

As a result of the brief protection afforded by the little navy called into existence by our war with France, the exports from the United States increased from $57,000,000 in 1797—when not a single American cruiser was in commission—to $78,665,528 in 1799: an increase of over $21,000,000. In the same period the revenue on imports rose from $6,000,000 to $9,080,932. The entire cost of this naval force, including construction, equipment and maintenance, was not over $6,000,000—a fairly good commentary on the sound common sense of insuring the safety and prosperity of the country by maintaining a navy of a size proportionate with its wealth. As if the lesson of the French war was not sufficient, the Government, on the conclusion of peace with France, immediately began to cut down the navy. It was under John Adams that the Navy Department had been es-

tablished and the new navy created. In fact, Adams all through the Revolution was one of the master minds who recognized the necessity of a naval establishment and did his utmost to advance the interests of our mercantile marine.

In the Presidential campaign of 1800, John Adams was defeated and Thomas Jefferson was elected President of the United States. As Jefferson represented the extreme democratic view of government—which at that time was as much opposed to a permanent navy as the country at large was to a standing army—it was generally believed that the newly created navy was doomed. In justice to the broad, discriminating statesmanship of Jefferson, however, it must be admitted that, on his accession to power, he placed the navy on a peace footing in a manner that would have done credit to John Adams himself.[1]

[1] That the opposition of the Democrats (as they may properly be called) to a standing army and a navy was, at that time, reasonable, will be seen in the following extracts from the private journal of William Maclay who, with Robert Morris, represented Pennsylvania in the first

It is true that there was a large reduction in the *matériel* and *personnel*, but on a careful inspection of this "cutting down" process it will be found that Jefferson, while making radical changes in almost every other de-

Congress, 1789-1791. It was a time when precedents were to be established and a strong effort was made by some to have the new government conform as much as possible to the pomp and parade of Old World courts, after so much had been done to establish a real Republic in America. In the absence of Thomas Jefferson in Europe, William Maclay, unquestionably, was the leader of democratic ideas and principles in the first Congress, and did much to frustrate the attempts of the "monarchists," as they were called by some, to ape the monarchical functions of European courts.

In his private journal, Mr. Maclay says: "It is the design of the Court party [referring to those who wished the new government to conform as much as possible to the monarchical ideas of the Old World] to have a fleet and an army. This was but the entering wedge of the new monarchy in America, after all the bloodshed and sufferings of a seven-years' war to establish a republic. The Indian war is forced forward to justify our having a standing army, and eleven unfortunate men now in slavery in Algiers is the pretext for fitting out a fleet." In another place he says: "I have heard it break out often. It is another menace to our republican institutions."—See William Maclay's Journal, p. 383.

partment, left the navy practically unimpaired.

When peace was proclaimed there were thirty-four war-ships in the navy, nineteen of which were disposed of; leaving only fifteen in the service. This, at first glance, might seem like a sweeping reduction but the sifting out had been done advisedly so that, while nineteen out of thirty-four ships had been retired, the actual strength of the navy had been reduced only one-fifth—the vessels retained being the largest and most formidable while those discarded were of the lower ratings.

In reducing the *personnel*, however, there was, necessarily, much injustice done. It is easy to discriminate between the fair and poor qualities of competitive ships, so as to determine which are the more valuable but when such choice is made between a given number of officers the difficulties are obvious. It cannot be denied that Captain Brown's record in the two-years' war against France had been exemplary—if not distinguished. He did not have the coveted oppor-

tunity of meeting a foe worthy of his steel and, while his service was one of constant activity, watchfulness, anxiety and strain, there was nothing about it which we can point out as distinguishing it from that performed by a score of his brother officers.

When the *personnel* of the navy was cut down to nine captains, thirty-six lieutenants and one hundred and fifty midshipmen, Captain Brown was one of the twenty-eight captains who were "honorably discharged." It is possible that politics had something to do with the venerable sailor's retirement, as he was a decided Federalist (though not a warm partisan), the party that formed the opposition to the newly elected President. To use his own words, spoken twelve years before, he found himself thrown "once more on the wide world for employment to earn bread for myself and family."

Thus, after forty-four years of continuous service on the ocean, the last two of which had been spent in Uncle Sam's navy, Captain Brown

found himself turned adrift on the world to shift for himself, with nothing to show for these long years of toil but a weakened frame, a goodly shock of white hair and a rich fund of experience—assets that seldom profit a fortune-seeker at the age of threescore.

The gallant *Merrimac*, shortly after her arrival in Boston from her West Indian service, was sold in 1801 for $21,154, nearly half of her original cost to the Government, which was $46,170. Her name was changed to *Monticello*, in honor of Thomas Jefferson's home, and she was fitted out as a merchantman. "As though indignant at the insult" [*i. e.*, the transformation from a noble war-ship to a merchant tramp], writes Mr. Swett, "she soon lay a wreck on the sands of Cape Cod in one common tomb with her new commander; as the Scythian warrior and his war-horse of old shared one common grave."

Captain Brown, however, pluckily kept the faith and made a good fight. He turned to his old employers, and soon found a berth as cap-

tain of a merchantman. He made several voyages to the West Indies with varying success. While returning from Guadeloupe, he was seized with apoplexy, January 1, 1804. The ship, at the time, was in sight of the Long Island shore. Realizing the seriousness of the stroke, Captain Brown—toward sundown, the weather being fine—asked to be carried on deck in order that he might see his native land before he died. Tenderly the rough seamen lifted the dying sea warrior on deck, and placed him in his armchair. At his request he was then turned slowly around so as to view all points of the horizon in succession. Having completed the circle and taking a last look at his beloved native land, he feebly remarked: "I have seen enough. Carry me below." He was taken to his cabin and died in an hour. When the news arrived in Newburyport all the shipping in port half-masted their colors.

Although the ship was only a few days' sail from her home port, Captain Brown was buried at sea. At first, much surprise was expressed by

members of his family that his remains had not been kept until arrival in port but it was afterward believed that the venerable mariner himself had asked to have a sailor's burial. "His funeral rites," said Mr. Swett, "were entirely appropriate and perfectly in keeping with the whole tenor of his life. The only appropriate tomb for him was the deep where, during the whole of his protracted life, had been his home. The only proper mausoleum for him was the mountain wave which he had so long made subservient to his will."

> The ocean he sailed on while living,
> Will sigh o'er him when he is gone.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONCLUSION

IN this work the writer has endeavored to give, not so much a life of Moses Brown, as a picture of the daily perils, hardships, privations and adventures of the average naval officer, in the early days of the service. But Brown's adventures, extraordinary as they certainly were, are only a counterpart of those experienced (with some variation) by dozens of brother officers of his day and scores and hundreds of those who succeeded him.

His experiences are startling to the reading public because we know them to be true. Fiction would fear to follow where these facts have led the way. It has been this dearth of detail in the personality of our seamen that has, to a large extent, deadened public interest in the navy. As we have seen, the bare outlines of the

life of Moses Brown furnish material for several works of fiction.

In the Explanatory note introducing this volume mention is made of Dame Opportunity. In that preface the every-day, unofficial opportunity—the opportunity that does not catch the public ear or dazzle the public eye—was not touched upon. The writer doubts not that every man in the United States navy to-day, of twenty or more years' service, can recall acts of heroism on the part of officers or men of the ship's company, performed in the ordinary, every-day routine of ship life, that were fully equal in point of personal bravery or patriotic fervor to any that have been exploited in page after page of popular literature.

It has been the writer's privilege to visit frequently war-ships of the United States—and those of other nations—in foreign ports. At one time, while in Yokohama, Japan, he witnessed the rescue of the crew of a Japanese junk, that had been entangled in the wreck of the Pacific Mail steamer *America* near the

Kanagawa forts. The Bund was lined with American, English, French and native spectators—a terrific typhoon being under full head at the time. Two boats put out from an American war-ship and, in spite of the appalling chop seas, saved the Islanders.

Some years later the writer witnessed an ordinary maneuver in the Thames, England, on the part of a United States war-ship when the lives of several hundred excursionists depended on the calmness of one officer. As many know, the ebb and flood tide in the Thames, when at "full rush," is tremendous. Few steamers can stem it. The war-ship in question was obliged to change her moorings and had got under way, when an excursion steamer came dashing around a bend in the river with the ebb tide at its strongest—crowded with pleasure-seekers.

Unluckily, the Yankee war craft, getting her "nose caught afoul of the stream," swung broadly across the narrow river, so that a disastrous collision with the excursion boat seemed

unavoidable. The captain of the cruiser being absent, a young officer was in command. As the fearful situation dawned upon the crew every eye in that well-drilled ship's company was instinctively fixed on the young officer and, for an instant, a dead silence fell over the men, as they awaited his next order. It was a trying moment, just such as confronted Farragut in Mobile Bay, when he said, "Damn the torpedoes!"

Taking in the situation at a glance, the officer leaned far over the rail of the quarter deck and in a calm, harsh voice, that carried inexpressible authority in it, said to the master of an English coaster that was anchored in the way, "I guess you'd better slip your anchor chain." The Englishman promptly complied, the swift tide carrying his craft downstream sixty fathoms. The man-of-war then dropped an anchor and, in less time than it takes to tell it, straightened out in the berth so hastily vacated by the coaster—the excursion boat just cleared the war-ship's stern.

CONCLUSION

The incident may seem trivial and trivial it certainly was in its results, for no life was lost and no injury was done; yet the maneuver was cleverly conceived, quickly executed and called for the qualities of a great commander in the height of a naval engagement. Had the young officer's nerve or wit failed at that critical moment, one of the greatest disasters in British river navigation would have resulted.

These are merely two incidents that have fallen within the observation of the writer. That there have been hundreds and thousands, equally praiseworthy in their nature, which have never reached the public, is obvious. Captain Brown belonged to that large class of patient, conscientious, painstaking officers who, while faithfully performing the every-day drudgery of routine work, year after year, never received even an official recognition of their worth beyond that of slow promotion.

In personal appearance Moses Brown was about six feet high, with a well-knit figure, broad shoulders and, in later years, somewhat

corpulent, though ever light and active on his feet. He shaved his face smooth, after the fashion of the day, and wore a wig with wavy tresses—possibly in keeping with his life on the ocean. It is estimated that in the forty-seven years he spent at sea he made over sixty-five voyages, some of them covering more than a year, and one over two years. He was taken prisoner three times, fought two full-fledged battles, captured about ten of the enemy's vessels and had the ghastly distinction of having been buried alive—at least his supposedly lifeless body was sewed up in a canvas shroud, with heavy shot at his feet and the board was about to be tipped up when signs of life were discovered in him.

Captain Brown's toast to "General Washington, the Commander-in-chief of the American Army"—given while he was a prisoner aboard the 50-gun frigate *Experiment*, Captain Sir James Wallace, and in the presence of his officers—is of itself sufficient to mark him as a man of strong character. It forms an

historical picture worthy of a place beside that of Molly Pitcher, Nathan Hale and other lesser lights of the Revolution.

While not loud in his religious professions, Captain Brown practiced that quiet, unassuming Christianity so frequently seen in the navy, and so delightful to those who really "know the man" and realize how bravely he is endeavoring to follow the higher ideals of life without preaching or parading it before his brother officers.

It is not probable that Moses Brown, on sailing from port, ever went so far as to leave a note for the minister asking for prayers that "God would preserve him in his attempt to scour the coast of our unnatural enemies"—and incidentally show a handsome balance on the books in the counting room of the privateer's owners. This is what the commander of the *Gamecock*—a pert little sloop of thirty tons and carrying four swivels—always did and, being one of the first private-armed cruisers to get to sea in the Revolution (sailing in

August, 1775), the precedent was more or less religiously followed by many of our privateersmen throughout that struggle.

That Captain Brown was not a superstitious man is shown in the fact that he consented to take command of the *Merrimac* with the full knowledge of the baleful circumstances that her keel was laid on a Friday and that she was christened on that unlucky day—and, singularly enough, her first prize was taken on a Friday.

From all the evidence we have in hand we conclude that Captain Brown had that thoroughly gentlemanly accomplishment of refraining from the use of profane or harsh expletives in his speech. In his treatment of his subordinates—at least in his later years—he refrained from "jumping at a conclusion," allowed the man a chance to recover from that "stage fright" or trepidation a true sailor usually feels when addressing (out of the ordinary routine) an officer, encouraged the men to explain themselves fully, and looked on both

sides of the question before coming to a decision.

It must not be inferred from the foregoing that Captain Brown was of the loblolly, soft-hearted and soft-headed order. It is the testimony of all who served under him that he was a disciplinarian of the strictest kind; placing no burden on the men that they could not properly perform, but exacting the utmost precision and celerity for the task in hand.

Moses Brown died a poor man, that is, he left no considerable property. He had always managed, however, to maintain his family bountifully and to educate his children. He was of an exceedingly social disposition and affectionate in his family relations, an exhaustless story-teller and a special favorite with the children, of whom he was very fond.[1]

[1] As showing his tender regard for children, the following letter from Captain Brown to the widow of his son William, who was lost at sea, 1799, is given:

St. Kitts, U. S. Ship *Merrimack,* Oct. ye 28 1800.

My Dear Catey,

it is with anctious simpithy I imploy my pen on so meloncoly a Subject; but a letter

A SYMPATHETIC NATURE

We get an interesting side-light on the Captain's character in the following quotation from the pamphlet of Samuel Swett: "In the Arminian church, where he worshiped,—which,

Resiev'd from my Brother confirms my opinion of the loss of my son & your husband; God in wisdom chastizes us; and I hope it will be for our futer good my Dear girl I know the stroke is heavey on you but Remember tis the same hand that gave him that is ye author of this fatal blow and put your trust in him who is the widdows god and father of ye fatherless children, who hath said leave thy fatherless children I will keep them alive and let thy widdows trust in me. Breach on breach has been made in my family & tis a dept we must all pay (man was born to die) we know not when nor where, tis therefore our duty to Endeavor to be Ready for that Solom hour. my daughter I must beg you to compose your Self as well as possible and Remember in me you have a father and friend on earth & I hope above a father that is better than all earthly parents.

how short and hasty is our day
Life's but a tottering wall
the daley breaches plainly tell
the house must shortly fall

I cannot but expect to follow my children soon Even if I live to what is called the age of men—tis but a few days at most.

Your affectionate father,

Moses Brown.

in his day was, by a great majority, deemed to be heretical and its worshipers doomed to destruction—preparations had been made, on Sunday, for baptism of one of Captain Brown's grandchildren. But when the time arrived for the performance of the rite, the child was not forthcoming. The erect, courteous and patriarchal clergyman, Parson Cary, arose in his pulpit and, knowing well his man and that he could depend on his self-possession, inquired: "Captain Brown, do you expect your grandchild to be brought in for baptism to-day?"

The Captain, rising in his pew, in his plain, simple manner, replied:

"I did expect it, sir, but they seem to have been detained;" and the services proceeded as usual, as if nothing uncommon had taken place.

Although not a total abstainer (such characters were few and far between in those days), Captain Brown was a temperate man in the best sense of the phrase, and endeavored to inculcate his principles in those around him, as will be

seen in the following story: "Captain Brown was very exemplary in his moderation. While on a voyage and discovering that one of his officers too frequently and immoderately resorted to a small cask of spirits—a part of the ship's stores—he did not hesitate to make what he must have esteemed a very great sacrifice. In his conciliatory manner he made an imperceptible leak in the cask by which it was effectually drained. When this officer next resorted to the cask and, putting his hand on it, discovered that it was empty, so abject a slave had he become to the enemy that was destroying him, body and soul, and so appalled was he at the sudden and instant sense of his deprivation, that his whole strength failed him—he sank under it helpless on the floor."

Two of Captain Brown's sons, William and Moses, were lost at sea.

The descendants of Moses Brown have held many honored positions—social and political—in New England. The only male great-grandchildren now living, however, are Mr. Causten

Browne, a prominent lawyer in Boston, George Brown, of Bangor, Me., and the Hon. Moses Brown, of Newburyport, Mass. George Brown was major in the First Maine Cavalry during the Civil War.

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APPENDIX

EXPLANATION OF THE "MINERVA'S" COMMISSION:

At the upper left-hand corner is the seal of the Navy Department, or Admiralty Office, as it was then called. It shows a frigate under top-sails and has crossed anchors below. In the circle around the seal are the words: "U. S. A., Sigil Naval," while the rest of the circle is filled in with six-pointed stars. The commission (which is a document 12x16 inches) reads as follows:

THE CONGRESS
Of the United States of America,
To ALL to whom these presents shall come,
send GREETING.

KNOW YE
THAT we have granted, and by these presents do grant license and authority to Moses

Brown, Esq.—Mariner, Commander of the Ship called the *Minerva*—of the burthen of Two hundred & twenty—tons or thereabouts, belonging to Nathaniel and John Tracy of Newburyport, County of Essex & Commonwealth of Massachusetts, mounting sixteen carriage guns, and navigated by sixty men—men, of out and set forth the said ship—in a warlike manner, and by and with the said ship—and officers and crew thereof, by force of arms, to attack, subdue, seize and take all ships and other vessels, goods, wares, and merchandizes belonging to the Crown of Great Britain, or any of the subjects thereof, (except the ships or vessels together with their cargoes belonging to the Inhabitants of Bermuda, and such other ships or vessels bringing persons, with intent to settle within any of the said United States, which ships or vessels you shall suffer to pass unmolested, Masters thereof permitting a peaceable search, and giving satisfactory information of the lading and their destination) or any other ships or vessels, goods, wares or

merchandizes to whomsoever belonging which are or shall be declared to be subjects of capture by any Resolutions of CONGRESS, or which are so deemed by the LAW of NATIONS: And the said ships and vessels, goods, wares and merchandizes so apprehended as aforesaid and as prize taken, to bring into port in order that proceedings may be had concerning such captures in due Form of Law, and as to Right and Justice appertaineth. And we request all Kings, Princes, States, and Potentates, being in Friendship or Alliance with the said United States, and others to whom it shall appertain to give the said Moses Brown all aid, assistance and succour in their ports with his said vessel, company and prizes. WE, in the name and on behalf of the Good People of the said United States, engaging to do the like to all the Subjects of such Kings, Princes, States and Potentates, who shall come into any Ports in the said United States; and We will and require all our officers whatsoever, to give to the said Moses Brown all necessary aid, suc-

cour and assistance in the premises. This Commission shall continue in force during the pleasure of the Congress, and no longer.

IN TESTIMONY whereof, We have caused the Seal of the Admiralty of the United States to be affixed hereunto.

WITNESS His Excellency, Samuel Huntington, Esquire, President of the CONGRESS of the United States of America, at Philadelphia this twenty-fourth day of February in the Year of our Lord One thousand, seven hundred and eighty-one and in the fifth year of our Independence.

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON,
President.

Passed the Admiralty Office,
JOHN BROWN,
Secretary to the Board of Admiralty.

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